

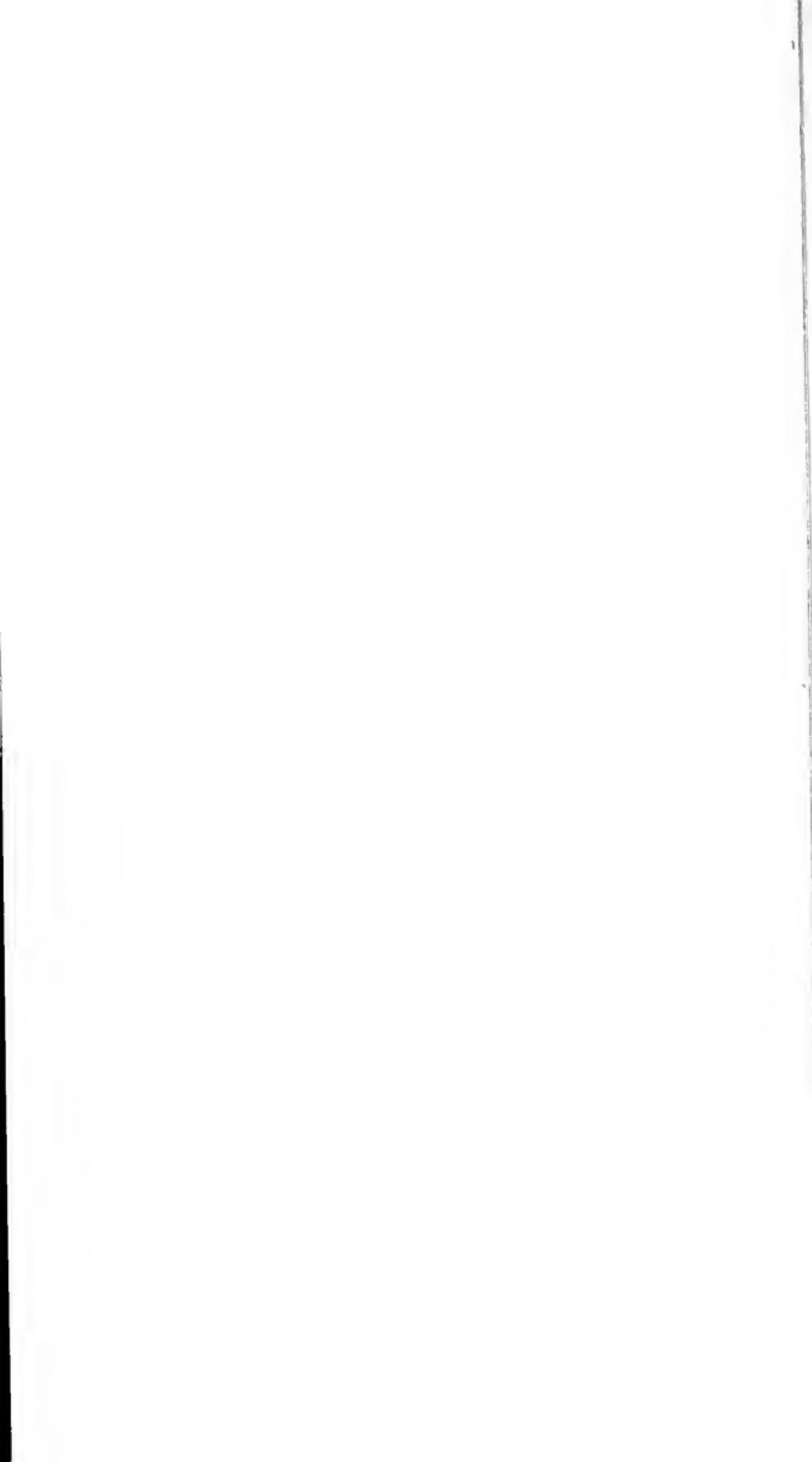
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THE HISTORY
OF
THOMAS OF READING;
OR THE
SIX WORTHY YEOMEN
OF THE WEST.

BY THOMAS DELONEY.

LONDON:

WILLIAM PICKERING, CHANCERY LANE.

MDCCCXXVII.



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THOMAS OF READING.

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Parker,

“ *Thomas of Reading, or the Sixe Worthie Yeomen of the West,*” is the production of Thomas Deloney, the compiler of the “ *Garland of Good-will,*” a poetical collection of local tales and historical ditties; and a famous ballad maker in his day, in which latter character he appears to have drawn upon himself the indignation of Kemp, one of the original actors of Shakspeare, in his “ *Nine Daies Wonder.*” Kemp’s miraculous morris-dance, performed in nine days from London to Norwich, had been misrepresented in the popular ballads, and he thus remonstrates against our author. “ I have made a priuie search; what priuate jig-monger of your jolly number had been the author of these abhominable ballets written of me. I was told it was the great ballade-maker, T. D. or Thomas Deloney, chronicler of the memorable Lives of the Six Yeomen

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“ *of the West*,” “ *Jack of Newberry*,” “ *the Gentle Craft*,” and such like honest men, omitted by “ Stowe, Hollinshed, Grafton, Hall, Froysart, and “ the rest of those well-deserving writers.”

Accordingly we find “ Thomas of Reading” to be a mixture of historical fact and fictitious narration, which may be compared to the historical novel of modern times ; for Coates, in his History of Reading, acknowledges the existence of our hero, even while he speaks slightly of Deloney’s history. “ The trade of Reading, with respect to manufac-“ tories, is no longer considerable. *Thomas Cole*, in “ the time of Edward I. (query Henry I.) was called “ the Rich Clothier of Reading. Though his name “ and reputation occasioned a fabulous and childish “ penny history, called the ‘ History of Thomas of “ Reading ;’ yet we may learn from the circum-“ stance, that Reading was even then famous for its “ trade of clothing.”

Thomas of Reading contains many curious allusions to manners and customs now obsolete ; and,

though grounds of origin for several circumstances are stated which are not strictly borne out by historical research, much curious information may be gleaned from it. It would be tedious to illustrate every point to which our attention might be drawn ; but the allusion to the *Gibbet Law of Halifax*, which was in full force at the time our author wrote, seems to justify some notice. This custom is supposed to have originated when the manor of Wakefield (of which Halifax was part) was bestowed on Earl Warren ; for in the reign of King Edward I. at the pleas of assizes and jurats at the borough of Scarborough, John Earl of Warren and Surry, answering to a writ of *quo warranto*, said, That he claimed Gallows at Coningsburgh and Wakefield, and the power of doing what belonged to a gallows in all his lands and fees, and that he and all his ancestors had used the same from time immemorial, &c. The law or custom as regards Halifax appears to have been to the effect that,

1st. The thief was to be taken within the liberty,

and if he escaped out of the liberty he could not be brought back to be executed ; but if ever he returned again, and was taken, he was sure to suffer, as was the case with one Lacy, who after his escape lived seven years out of the Liberty, but venturing back was beheaded on his former verdict in the year 1623. This man was not so wise as one Dinnis, who having been condemned to die, escaped out of the Liberty on the day intended for his execution (which might be done by running about five hundred yards,) and never returned thither again ; meeting several people, they asked him “ if Dinnis was not to be beheaded that day ? ” his answer was, “ I trow not,” which having some humour in it, became a proverbial saying amongst the inhabitants, who to this day use the expression “ I trow not, quoth Dinnis.”

2d. The fact was to be proved in the clearest manner, the offender was to be taken either *hand-habend* or *backberand*, having the stolen goods either in his hand, or bearing them on his back ; or lastly, *confessand*, confessing that he took them.

3d. The value of the goods stolen must amount to thirteen pence halfpenny, or more.

4th. The accused was to be executed on the first Saturday after his condemnation, and

5th. When brought to the gibbet he was to have his head cut off from his body, &c.

Forty-nine persons appear to have been executed since a list was kept, of which five were in the six last years of Henry VIII.; twenty-five in the reign of Elizabeth: seven in that of James I.; ten in that of Charles I. and two during the interregnum.

The proceedings at the trials of the last malefactors, viz. Abraham Wilkinson and Andrew Mitchel, who suffered at Halifax gibbet on the 30th of April, 1650, are preserved in an account of Halifax, published by William Bentley, London, 1708; and in the Rev. Mr. Watson's History of Halifax, from which this account is taken, and where much curious matter is to be found, illustrative not only of the gibbet law of Halifax, but of the first gibbets or guillotines used in this country.

Thomas of Reading was printed previous to the year 1600, when it was alluded to by Kemp, but the precise date of the first Edition does not appear. The Marquis of Stafford possesses a copy in 4to. 1623, and in the Roxburgh sale “*The pleasant History of Thomas of Reading,*” 4to. 1636, produced £5. 15s. 6d.

The following entry in the Henslowe MSS. shews that it was made the subject of a dramatic performance:

12 Nov. 1601. *The six Clothiers of the West*, by Richard Hathway, Wentworth Smith and Wm. Haughton. The second part of *The Six Clothiers* by the same.

T H O M A S

OF

READING:

OR,

THE SIXE WORTHIE YEOMEN

OF THE WEST.

NOW THE SIXTH TIME CORRECTED AND ENLARGED

BY T. D.

Thov shalt labovr till thou retrvne to dvste.

LONDON,

PRINTED BY ELIZ. ALLDE FOR
ROBERT BIRD.

1632.



THE PLEASANT HISTORIE OF THE
SIXE WORTHY YEOMEN
OF THE WEST.

IN the dayes of King Henry the first, who was the first king that instituted the high Court of Parliament; there liued nine men, which for the trade of Clothing, were famous throughout all England. Which Art in those dayes was held in high reputation, both in respect of the great riches that thereby was gotten, as also of the benefit it brought to the whole Common-wealth: the yonger sons of knights and Gentlemen, to whom their Fathers would leaue no lands, were most commonly preferred to learne this trade, to the end, that thereby they might liue in good estate, and drive forth their dayes in prosperity.

Among all Crafts this was the onely chiefe, for that it was the greatest merchandize, by the which our Country became famous thorowout all Nations. And it was verily thought, that the one halfe of the people in the land liued in those dayes therby, and in such good sort,

that in the Common-wealth there were few or no beggers at all: poore people, whom God lightly blessed with most children, did by meanes of this occupation so order them, that by the time that they were come to be sixe or seuen yeeres of age, they were able to get their owne bread: Idlenesse was then banished our coast, so that it was a rare thing to heare of a thiefe in those dayes. Therefore it was not without cause that Clothiers were then both honoured and loued, among whom these nine persons in this kings dayes were of great credit, viz. Tho. Cole of Reading, Gray of Gloucester, Sutton of Salisburie, Fitzallen of Worcester, (commonly called William of Worcester) Tom Doue of Excester, and Simon of South-hampton, alias Supbroth: who were by the King called, The sixe worthy Husbands of the West. Then were there three liuing in the North, that is to say, Cutbert of Kendall, Hodgekins of Hallifax, and Martin Byram of Manchester. Euery one of these kept a great number of seruants at worke, spinners, carders, weauers, fullers, dyers, sheerement, and rowers, to the great admiration of all those that came into their houses to behold them.

Now you shall vnderstand, these gallant Clothiers, by reason of their dwelling places, separated themselues in three seuerall companies: Gray of Gloucester, William of Worcester, and Thomas of Reading, because their iourney to London was all one way, they conuersed commonly together: And Doue of Excester, Sutton of Salisburie, and Simon of South-hampton, they in like sort kept

company the one with the other, meeting euer all together at Bazingstoke: and the three Northerne Clothiers did the like, who commonly did not meet till they came to Bosomes Inne in London.

Moreover, for the loue and delight that these Westerne men had each in others companie, they did so prouide, that their Waines and themselues would euer meet upon one day in London at Iarrats Hall, surnamed the Gyant, for that hee surpassed all other men of that age, both in stature and strength: whose merriments and memorable deeds I will set downe vnto you in this following discourse.

How King Henry sought the fauour of all his subjects especially of the Clothiers. Chap. 1.

This King Henry, who for his great learning and wisdome was called Beauclerke, beeing the third Son to the renowned Conquerour: after the death of his brother William Ruffus, tooke vpon him the gouernment of this Land, in the absence of his second brother Robert Duke of Normandie, who at this time was at wars amongst the Infidels, and was chosen King of Jerusalem, the which he, for the loue he bare to his owne country, refused, and with great honour returned from the holy Land; of whose coming when King Henry vnderstood, knowing hee would make claime to the Crowne, sought by all meanes possible to winne the good will of his Nobility, and to get the fauor of the Commons by courtesie: for the obtaining whereof hee did them many fauours,

thereby the better to strengthen himselfe against his brother.

It chanced on a time, as he, with one of his sonnes, and diuers of his Nobilitie, rode from London towards Wales, to appease the fury of the Welshmen, which then began to raise themselues in armes against his authority, that he met with a great number of Waines loaden with cloth, comming to London, and seeing them still drieue one after another so many together, demanded whose they were: the Waine-men answered in this sort: Coles of Reading (quoth they.) Then by and by the King asked another saying: Whose cloth is all this? Old Coles, quoth hee: and againe anon after he asked the same questions to others, and still they answered, Old Coles. And it is to be remembred, that the king met them in such a place so narrow and streight, that hee with the rest of his traine, were faine to stand as close to the hedge, whilst the carts passed by, the which at that time being in number aboue two hundred, was neere hand an hour ere the King could get roome to be gone: so that by his long stay, he began to be displeased, although the admiration of that sight did much qualifie his furie; but breaking out in discontent, by reason of his stay, he said, I thought Old Cole had got a Commission for all the carts in the Country to eary his cloth. And how if he hane (quoth one of the Wainmen) doth that grieue you good sir? Yes, good sir, said our King, what say you to that? The fellow seeing the King (in asking that question) to bend his

browes, though he knew not what he was, yet being abasht, he answered thus: Why sir, if you be angry, no body can hinder you; for possible sir, you haue anger at commandement. The king seeing him in vttering of his words to quiever and quake, laughed heartily at him, as well in respect of his simple answere, as at his feare: and so soone after the last Wain went by, which gaue present passage vnto him and his Nobles: and thereupon entring into communication of the commoditie of cloathing, the king gaue order at his home returne, to have Old Cole brought before his Maiestie, to the intent he might haue conference with him, noting him to be a subiect of great abilitie: but by that time he came within a mile of Staines, he met another company of waines in like sort laden with cloth, whereby the king was driven into a further admiration: and demanding whose they were, answere was made in this sort: They be good-man Suttons of Salisbury, good sir; and by that time a score of them were past, he asked againe, saying; whose are these; Suttons of Salisbury, qd. they, and so still, as often as the king asked that question, they answered, Suttons of Salisburie. God send me many such Suttons, said the king. And thus the farther he trauelled Westward, more Waines and more he met continually: vpon which occasion he said to his Nobles, That it would neuer grieve a king to die for the defence of a fertile Countrie and faithful subiects. I alwayes thought (quoth he) that Englands valor was more than her wealth, yet now I see her wealth

sufficient to maintaine her valour, which I will seeke to cherish in all I may, and with my sword keepe my selfe in possession of that I haue, Kings and Louers can brooke no partners : and therefore let my Brother Robert thinke, that although hee was Heir to England by birth, yet I am King by possession. All his fauourers I must account my foes, and will serue them as I did the vngratefull Earle of Shrewsbury, whose lands I haue seized, and baniſht his body. But now we will leaue the king to his iourney into Wales, and waiting his home returne, in the meane time tell you the meeting of these iolly Clothiers at London.

How William of Worcester, Gray of Gloucester, and old Cole of Reading, met altogether at Reading, and of their communication by the way as they rode to London. Chap. 2.

WHEN Gray of Gloucester, and William of Worcester were come to Reading, according to their custome, they alwayes called old Cole to haue his compaines to London, who also duely attended their commynge, hauing provided a good breakefast for them : and when they had well refreshed themselues, they tooke their horses and rode on towards the Citie : and in their iourney William of Worcester asked them if they had not heard of the Earle of Moraigne his escape out of the Land ? What is he fled qd. Gray ? I muse much at this matter, being in such great regard with the King as he was : but I pray you, doe you not know the cause of his going,

qd. Cole? The common report, quoth Gray, is this, that the couetous Earle, who through a greedy desire, neuer left begging of the King for one thing or other, and his request being now denied him, of meere obstinacy and wilfull fowardnesse, hath banished himselfe out of the Land, and quite forsaken the Country of Cornwall, hauing made a vow neuer to set foote within England againe, and as report goeth, he with the late banisht Earl of Shrewsbury, haue ioyned themselues with Robert Duke of Normandy, against the King, the which actions of theirs hath inflamed the Kings wrath, that their Ladies with their children are quite turned out of doores succourlesse and friendlesse, so that it is told me, they wander vp and downe the Country like forlorne people, and although many doe pitie them, yet few doe releeue them.

A lamentable hearing, qd. William of Worcester, and with that casting their eyes aside, they espyed Tom Doue with the rest of his companions come riding to meeete them, who as soone as they were come thither, fell into such pleasant discourses, as did shorten the long way they had to Colebroke, where alwayes at their comming towards London they dined: and being once entred into their Inne, according to olde custome, good cheere was prouided for them: for these Clothiers were the chiefest guests that traualled along the way: and this was as sure as an act of Parliament, that Tom Doue could not digest his meat without musicke, nor drinke wine without women, so that his hostesse being a merry wench, would

oftentimes call in two or three of her neighbours wiues to keepe him company, where, ere they parted, they were made as pleasant as Pies. And this being a continuall custome amongst them when they came thither, at length the womens husbands beganne to take exceptions at their wiues going thither: whereupon great controuersie grew betweene them, in such sort, that when they were most restrained, then they had most desire to worke their wills: now gip (quoth they) must we be so tyed to our taske, that wee may not drinke with our friends? fie, fie, vpon these yellow hose; will no other die serue your turne? haue wee thus long bin your wiues, and doe you now mistrust vs? verily you eate too much salt, and that makes you grow cholericke, badde liuers iudge all others the like, but in faith you shall not bridle vs so like asses, but wee will goe to our friends, when we are sent for, and doe you what you can. Well, quoth their husbands, if you be so head-strong, we will tame you: it is the duty of honest women to obey their husbands sayings. And of honest men (quoth they) to thinke well of their wiues; but who doe sooner impeach their credit, then their husbands, charging them, if they doe but smile, that they are subtil; and if they doe but winke, they account them wily: if sad of countenance, then sullen: if they be froward, then they are counted shrewes: and sheepish if they bee gentle: if a woman keepe her house, then you will say shee is melancholy, if shee walke abroade, then you call her a gadder; a Puritane, if she be precise; and a wanton, if shee be

pleasant: so there is no woman in the world that knowes how to please you: that we thinke our selues accurst to be married wiues, liuing with so many woes. These men, of whose company you forewarne vs, are (for ought that euer we saw) both honest and courteous, and in wealth farre beyond your selues: then what reason is there, why we should restraine to visit them? is their good will so much to be requited with scorne, that their cost may not be counteruailed with our company? if a woman be disposed to play light of loue, alas, alas doe you thinke that you can preuent her? Nay, wee will abide by it, that the restraint of liberty inforceth women to be lewd: for where a woman cannot be trusted, she cannot thinke her selfe beloued, and if not beloued, what cause hath she to care for such a one? therefore husbands, reforme your opinions, and doe not worke your owne woes, with our discredit. The Clothiers, we tell you, are iolly fellowes, and but in respect to our courtesie, they would scorne our company.

The men hearing their wiues so well to plead for themselues, knew not how to answere, but said, they would put the burden on their consciences, if they deale vniustly with them, and so left them to their owne wills. The women hauing thus conquered their husbands conceits, would not leaue the fauour of their friends for frownes, and as aboue the rest Tom Doue was the most pleasantest, so was he had in most reputation with the women, who for his sake made this Song:

Welcome to Towne, Tom Doue, Tom Doue,
The merriest man aliu,

Thy company still we loue, we loue,
God grant thee well to thriue,
And neuer will (we) depart from thee,
For better or worse, my ioy,
For thou shalt still haue our good will,
Gods blessing on my sweet Boy.

This song went vp and downe through the whole Country, and at length became a dance among the common sort, so that Tom Doue, for his mirth and good fellowship, was famous in euery place. Now when they came to London, they were welcome to the Oast Iarrat the Gyant, and as soone as they were alighted, they were saluted by the Merchants, who waited their coming thither, and alwayes prepared for them a costly supper, where they commonly made their bargaine, and vpon euery bargaine made, they still vsed to send some tokens to the Clothiers wiues. The next morning they went to the hall, where they met the Northerne Clothiers, who greeted one another in this sort. What, my Masters of the West, well met: what cheere? what cheere? Euen the best cheere our Merchants could make vs: (quoth Gray.) Then you could not chuse but fare well, quoth Hodgekins: and you be weary of our company, adieu, quoth Sutton: Not so, said Martin, but shall wee not haue a game ere wee goe! Yes faith for an hundred pounds. Well said, old Cole, said they: and with that Cole and Gray went to the Dice with Martin and Hodgekins, and the Dice running on Hodgekins side, Coles money began to waste. Now by the masse, quoth Cole, my money shrinkes as bad as Northerne cloth. When they

had played long, Gray stept to it, and recovered againe the money that Cole had lost. But while they were thus playing, the rest being delighted in contrary matters euery man satisfied his owne humour.

Tom Doue called for musicke, William of Worcester for wine, Sutton set his delight in hearing merry tales, Simon of South-hampton got him into the kitchin, and to the pottage pot he goes, for he esteemed more a messe of pottage, then of a venizon pasty. Now sir, Cutbert of Kendall was of another mind, for no meate pleased him so well as mutton, such as was laced in a red petticoate. And you shall vnderstand, that alwayes when they went to dice, they got into Bosomes Inne; which was so called of his name that kept it, who being a foule slouen, went alwayes with his nose in his bosome, and one hand in his pocket, the other on his staffe, figuring forth a description of cold Winter, for he always wore two coates, two caps, two or three paire of stockings, and a high paire of shooes, ouer the which he drew on a great paire of lined slippers, and yet would oft complaine of cold wherfore of all men generally he was called Old Bosome, and his house Bosomes Inne.

This lump of cold ice had lately married a young wife, who was as wily as she was wanton, and in her company did Cutbert onely delight, and the better to make passage to his loue, he would often thus commune with her: I muse, good wife, quoth he. Good wife, quoth she: Verily sir, in mine opinion, there is none good but God, and therefore call me Mistresse. Then said Cut-

bert, Faire Mistris, I haue often mused, that you being a proper woman, could find in your heart for to match with such a greazie Carle as this, an euill mannered mate, a foule lump of kitchin-stusfe, and such a one as is indeede, a scorne of men ; how can you like him that all women mislikes ? or loue such a loathsome creature ? me thinks verily it should grieue you to lend him a kisse, much more to lie with him. Indeed sir, quoth she, I had but hard fortune in this respect, but my friends would haue it so, and truly my liking and my loue toward him are alike, he neuer had the one, nor neuer shall get the other : yet I may say to you Before I married him, there were diuers proper young men that were sutors vnto me, who loued mee as their liues, and glad was he that could get my company, those were my golden dayes, wherein my pleasure abounded, but these yeeres of care and griefe, wherin my sorrowes exceede. Now no man regards mee, no man cares for me, and albeit in secret they might beare mee good-will, yet who dares shew it ? and this is a double griefe, he carries ouer me so iealous a minde, that I cannot looke at a man, but presently he accuseth me of inconstancy, although (I protest) without cause.

And in troth, qd. Cutbert, he should haue cause to complaine for somewhat, were I as you. As sure as I liue, and so he shall, quoth she, if he doe not change his byas. Cutbert hearing her say so, began to grow further in requesting her fauour, wishing he might be her seruant and secret friend, and the better to obtaine

his desire, he gaue her diuers gifts, insomuch that she began something to lissen vnto him : and albeit she liked well of his speeches, yet would she blame him, and take him vp very short sometimes for the same, till in the end, Cutbert shewed himselfe to be desperate, saying hee would drowne himselfe rather than liue in her disdaine. O my sweet heart not so, quoth shee, God forbid I should be the death of any man : Comfort thy selfe, kind Cutbert, and take this kisse in token of further kindnesse, and if thou wilt haue my fauour, thou must be wise and circumspect, and in my husbands sight I would alwayes haue thee to find fault with my doings, blame my bad huswifries, dispraise my person, and take exceptions at euery thing whereby he will be as well pleased, as Simon of South-hampton with a messe of pottage.

Deare Mistresse, quoth he, I will fulfill your charge to the vttermost, so that you will not take my iest in earnest. Shee answered, Thy foulest speeches I will esteeme the fairest, and take euery dispraise to be a praise from thee, turning each word to the contrary : and so for this time adieu, good Cuth. for supper time drawes neere, and it is meet for me to looke for my meat. With that down comes old Bosome, calling his wife, saying, Ho Winifred, is supper ready ? they haue done playing aboue : therefore let the Chamberlaine couer the Table. By and by, qd. she, it shall be done straight-way. How now my Masters who wins, qd. Cutbert ? Our money walkes to the West, qd. Martin :

Cole hath woone 40 pounds of me, and Gray hath gotten well: the best is qd. Hodgekins, they will pay for our supper: then let vs haue good store of Sacke, qd. Sutton. Content said Cole, for I promise you, I striue not to grow rich by Dice-playing, therefore call for what you will, I will pay for all. Yea said Simon Chamberlaine, I pray thee bring a whole bottle of pottage for me. Now Tom Doue had all the fidlers at a becke of his finger, which follow him vp and down the City, as diligent as little chickens after a hen, and made a vow, that there should want no Musicke. And at that time there liued in London a Musician of great reputation, named Reior, who kept his seruants in such costly garments, that they might seeme to come before any Prince. Their coates were all of one colour; and it is said, that afterward the Nobility of this Land, noting it for a seemely sight, vsed in like manner to keepe their men all in one liuery. This Reior was the most skilfullest Musician that liued at that time, whose wealth was very great, so that all the Instruments whereon his seruants plaid, were richly garnished with studdes of siluer, and some gold: the bowes belonging to their Violines were all likewise of pure siluer. Hee was also for his wisedome called to great Office in the City, who also builded (at his owne cost) the Priory and Hospital of S. Bartholomew in Smithfield. His seruants being the best consorts in the City, were by Tom Doue appointed to play before the young Princes. Then supper being brought to the boord, they all sat down, and by and by

after comes vp their Oast, who tooke his place among them : and anon after, the good wife in a red petticoate and a waistcoate, comes among them as white as a Lilly, saying, My Masters, you are welcome, I pray you be merry. Thus falling close to their meate, when they had well fed, they found leysure to talke one with another : at what time Cuth. began thus to finde fault, Ywis, my Oast, quoth he, you haue a wise huswife to your wife, heere is meate drest of a new fashion ? God sends meate, and the deuil sends cooks. Why what ailes the meate, quoth she, serues it not your turnes ? better men then your selfe are content withall, but aaultry companion is euer worst to please. Away, you sluttish thing, qd. Cutbert, your husband hath a sweet Jewell of you : I maruell such a graue ancient man would match himselfe with such a young giglot that hath as much handsomenes in her, as good huswifry, which is iust nothing at all. Well sir, said shee, in regard of my husbands presence I am loth to aggrauate anger, otherwise I would tell thee thy owne. Goe to, what needs all this, quoth the company ? in good faith, Cutbert, you are to blame, you find fault where none is. Tush, I must speake my mind, quoth Cutbert, I cannot dissemble, I trust the good man thinkes neuer the worse of me : so I haue his good will, what the foule euill care I for his wifes. Enough, quoth Tom Doue, let vs with Musicke remoue these brabbles, we meane to be merry, and not melancholy. Then said old Cole, Now trust me, Cutbert, we will have your Oastesse and you

friends ere we part : here woman I drinke to you, and regard not his words, for he is babbling wheresoeuer he comes. Quoth the woman, Nothing grieues me so much, as that hee should thus openly checke mee : if he had found any thing amisse, he might haue spied a better time to tell mee of it then nowe, ywis he need not thrust my bad huswifrie into my husbands head, I liue not so quietly with him, God wot : and with that she wept. Come Cutbert, quoth they, drinke to her, and shake hands and be friends. Come on, you puling baggage, quoth he, I drinke to you, here will you pledge mee and shake hands ? No, (quoth shee) I will see thee choackt first, shake hands with thee ? I will shake hands with the deuill as soone. Goe to, said her husband, you shall shake hands with him then : If you will not shake hands, Ile shake you : what, you young huswife ? Well, husband, said she, it becomes a woman to obey her husband, in regard whereof, I drink to him. Thats well said, quoth the company : and so she tooke her leave and went downe. And within a while after they paid the shot, and departed thence to Iarrats Hall, where they went to their lodging ; and the next day they tooke their way homeward alltogether : and comming to Colebrooke, they tooke vp their lodging : and it was Coles custome to deliuer his money to the good wife of the house to keepe it till morning, which in the end turned to his vtter destruction, as hereafter shall be shewed.

How Grays wife of Gloucester, with one or two more of her neighbours went to the Faire, where seruants came to be hired, and how she tooke the Earle of Shrewesburies Daughter into her seruice, Chap. 3.

IT was wont to be an old custome in Gloucestershire, that at a certaine time in the yeere, all such young men and Maidens as were out of seruice, resorted to a faire that was kept neere Gloucester, there to be ready for any that would come to hire them, the young men stood all on a row on the one side, and the maidens on the other. It came to pass, that the Earle of Shrewsburies daughter, whose father was lately banished, being driven into great distresse, and weary with trauell, as one whose delicate life was neuer vsed to such toyle, sate her downe vpon the high-way side, making this lamentation:

O false and deceitfull world, quoth she! who is in thee that wishes not to be rid of thee, for thy extremities are great? Thou art deceitfull to all, and trusty to none. Fortuner is thy treasurer, who is like thy selfe, wauering and vnconstant, she setteth vp tyrants, beateth downe Kings: giueth shame to some, and renowne to others: Fortune giueth these euils, and we see it not: with her hands she toucheth vs, and we feele it not; she treades vs vnder foot, and we know it not; she speakes in our eares, and we heare her not; she cries aloud, and we vnderstand her not: And why? because we know her not, vntill misery doth make her manifest.

Ah my deare father, well maist thou doe. Of all

misfortunes it is most vnhappy to be fortunate : and by this misfortune came my fall. Was euer good Lady brought to this extremity ? What is become of my rare Jewels, my rich aray, my sumptuous fare, my waiting seruants, my many friends, and all my vaine pleasures ? my pleasure is banisht by displeasure, my friends fled like foes, my seruants gone, my feasting turned to fasting, my rich array consumed to ragges, and my iewels decke out my chiefest enemies : therefore of all things the meanest state is best, pouerty with surety, is better than honour mixed with feare : seeing God hath allotted me to this misery of life, I will frame my heart to embrace humility, and carry a mind answerable to my misfortunes, fie on this vaine title of Ladiship, how little doth it auaile the distressed ? No, no, I must therefore forget my birth and parentage, and think no more on my fathers house, where I was wont to bee serued, now will I learne to serue, and plaine Meg shall be my name, good Lord grant I may get a good seruice, nay any seruice shall serue, where I may haue meat, drinke, and apparell. She had no sooner spoken these words, but she spied a couple of maidens more comming towards her ; who were going to the faire : and bidding her good morrow, asked her if she went to the faire. Yea mary qd. she I am a poor mans child that is out of seruice, and I heare that at the Statute, folkes doe come of purpose to hire seruants. True it is, said the Maidens, and thither goe we for the same purpose, and would be glad of your company. With a good will, and I am right

glad of yours, said she, beseeching you good Maidens, you will doe me the fauour, to tell me what seruice were best for me: for the more too blame my parents, they would neuer put me forth to know any thing. Why what can you doe (quoth the Maidens?) can you brew and bake, make butter and cheese, and reape corne well: No verily, said Margaret, but I would be right glad to learne to doe any thing whatsoeuer it be. If you could spin or card, said another, you might do excellent well with a Clothier, for they are the best seruices that I know, there you shall be sure to fare well, and so liue merrily.

Then Margaret wept, saying, alas, what shall I doe? I was neuer brought vp to these things. What, can you doe nothing, quoth they? No truly (quoth she) that is good for any thing, but I can read and write, and sowe, some skill I have in my needle, and a little ou my Lute: but this, I see will profit me nothing. Good Lord, quoth they, are you bookish? wee did neuer heare of a Maide before that could reade and write. And although you can doe no other thing, yet possible you may get a seruice, if you can behauue your selfe manerly. I pray you qd. another, seeing you are bookish, will you doe so much as to reade a loue-letter that is sent me? for I was at a friends of mine with it, and he was not at home, and so I know not what is in it. I pray you let me see it, quoth Margaret, and I will shew you. Whereupon she readeth as followeth.

O Ienny my ioy, I die for thy loue,
 And now I heare say that thou dost remoue :
 And therefore, Ienny, I pray thee recite,
 Where shall I meete thee soone at night.

For why, with my Master no more will I stay,
 But for thy loue I will runne away :
 O Ienny, Ienny, thou puttest me to paine,
 That thou no longer wilt here remaine.

I will weare out my shooes of Neats-leather,
 But thou and I will meete together,
 And in spight of Fortune, Rat, or Mouse,
 We will dwell together in one house.

For who doth not esteeme of thee ;
 Shall haue no seruice done of me :
 Therefore good Ienny haue a care,
 To meete poore Fragment at the faire.

Now alas, good soule (quoth Ienny) I thinke he be
 the kindest young man in the world. The rest answered,
 that he seemed no lesse, and surely it appeareth
 that he is a pretty witty fellow, quoth one of them, how
 finely hee hath written his letter in rime, trust me, I
 will giue you a good thing, and let me haue a copy of it
 to send to my sweet-heart : that you shall with all my
 heart ; and so comming to the faire, they tooke vp their
 standing.

Within a while after, goodwife Gray of Gloucester
 came thither to store her selfe of diuers commodities :

and when shee had bought what she would, she told her neighbour she had great need of a maid-servant or twaine ; therefore, qd. she, good neighbour goe with me, and let me haue your opinion. With a good will, said her neighbour, and together they went, and looking and viewing the maidens ouer, she tooke speciall notice of Margaret. Beleeue me, quoth shee, there stands a very proper maiden, and one of a modest and comely countenance. Verily, said her neighbour, so she is, as euer I looked vpon.

The maiden seeing them to view her so well, was so abashed, that a scarlet colour overspred her lilly cheekes, which the woman perceiuing, came vnto her, and asked if she were willing to serue. The maid with a low curtesie, and a most gentle speech, answered, it was the onely cause of her comming. Can you spinne or card, said good-wife Gray ? Truly Dame, said she, though my cunning therein be but small, my good will to learne is great, and I trust, my diligence shall content you. What wages will you take, quoth good-wife Gray ? I will referre that, said Margaret, to your conscience and courtesie, desiring no more then what I shall deserue. Then asking what Country-woman she was, the maiden wept, saying : Ah good Dame, I was vntimely borne in Shropshire, of poore parents, and yet not so needy as vnfortunate, but death hauing ended their sorrowes, hath left me to the cruelty of these eniuious times, to finish my Parents Tragedy with my troubles. What ? maiden qd. her dame, haue you a care to doe

your busines, and to liue in Gods feare, and you shall haue no care to regard fortunes frownes, and so they went home together.

Now, so soone as the good-man saw her, hee asked his wife where she had that maiden? She said, at the Faire. Why then quoth he, thou hast brought all the faire away, and I doubt it were better for vs, to send the faire to another Towne, then to keepe the faire here. Why man, quoth she, what meane you by that? Woman, I meane this, that she will proue a Loadstone, to draw the hearts of all my men after her, and so we shall haue wise service done of all sides. Then said his wife, I hope, husband, Margaret will have a better care both to her owne credit, and our commodity then so, and so let her alone to looke to such matters. Is thy name Margaret, quoth her Master? proper is thy name to thy person, for thou art a pearle indeed, orient, and rich in beauty.

His wife hearing him say so, began to change her opinion: What husband (quoth she) is the wind at that doore? Begin you to like your maid so well? I doubt I had most need to looke to your selfe: before God, I had rather then an angell I had chosen some other: but heare you maid, you shall packe hence, I will not nourish a Snake in my bosome, and therefore get you gone, I will none of you, prouide a seruice where you may.

The maiden hearing her say so, fell downe on her knees, and besought her, saying, O sweet dame, be not

so cruell to me, to turne me out of doores, now : alas, I know not where to goe, or what to doe, if you forsake me. O let not the fading beauty of my face dispoile me of your fauour : for rather then that shall hinder my seruice, this my knife shall soone disfigure my face, and I will banish beauty as my greatest enemy. And with that, her abundant teares stopped her speech, that shee could not vtter one word more.

The woman seeing this, could not harbour any longer, nor could her Master stay in the roome for weeping. Well, Margaret, said her dame (little knowing that a Lady kneeled before her) vsing thy selfe well I will keepe thee, and thou shalt haue my good will, if thou gouerne thyselfe with wisedome ; and so she sent her about her businesse, Her husband comming to supper, said, How now wife. art thou so doubtfull of me, that thou hast put away thy maiden ? I wis (qd. she) you are a wise man, to stand praising of a maidens beauty before her face : and you a wise woman, qd. he, to grow icalous without a cause. So to supper they went, and because Margaret shewed her selfe of finest behauour aboue the rest, she was appointed to waite on the table. And it is to be vnderstood, that Gray did neuer eate his meat alone, but still had some of his neighbours with him, before whom he called his maid, saying, Margaret, come hither. Now because there was another of the same name in the house, she made answer, I call not you, maiden, quoth he, but Margeret with the lilly-white hand. After which time she was euer called so.

How the Kings Maiestie sent for the Clothiers, and of
the sundry fauours which he did them. Chap. 4.

KING Henry prouiding for his voyage into France, against King Lewis and Robert Duke of Normandie his owne brother, committed the Gouvernement of the Realine in his absence, to the Bishop of Salisbury, a man of great wisedome and learning, whom the king esteemed highly, and afterward he thought good to send for the chiefe Clothiers of England, who according to the kings appointment came to the Court, and hauing licence to come before his Maiestie, he spake to this effect.

The strength of a King is the loue and friendship of his people, and he gouernes ouer his Realme most surely, that ruleth iustice with mercy : for he ought to feare many, whom many doe feare : therefore the Gouernors of the Common-wealth ought to obserue two speciall precepts: the one is, that they so maintaine the profit of the Commons, that whatsoeuer in their calling they doe, they referre it thereunto : the other, that they be alwayes as well carefull ouer the whole Common-wealth, as ouer any part thereof; lest, while they vphold the one, the other be brought to vtter decay.

And forasmuch as I doe vnderstand, and haue partly seene, that you the Clothiers of England are no small benefit to the wealth publike, I thought it good to know from your owne mouthes, if there be any thing not yet granted that may benefit you, or any other thing to be remoued that doth hurt you.

The great desire I haue to maintaine you in your trades, hath moued me hereunto. Therefore boldly say what you would haue in the one thing or the other, and I will grant it you.

With that, they all fell downe vpon their knees, and desired God to saue his Maiestie, and withall, requested three dayes respit to put in their answe: which was graunted. And thereupon they departed.

When the Clothiers had well considered of these matters, at length they thought meete to request of his Maiestie for their first benefit, that all the Cloth-measures thorow the Land might be of one length, whereas to their great disadvantage before, euery good towne had a seuerall measure, the difficulty thereof was such, that they could not keepe them in memory, nor know how to keepe their reckonings. The second thing whereof they found themselues grieved, was this, that the people would not take crackt money, though it were neuer so good siluer? whereupon it came to passe, that the Clothiers and diuers others, receiuing great summes of money, doe take among it much crackt money, it serued them to no vse, because it would not goe currant, but lay vpon their hands without profit or benefit, whereof they prayed reformation. The third was a grieve, whereof Hodgekins of Halifax complained, and that was, That whereas the Towne of Halifax liued altogether vpon Cloathing, and by the reason of false borderers, and other euill minded persons, they were oft robbed, and had their clothes carried out of their fieldes,

where they were drying : That it would please his Maiestie to graunt the Towne this priuilege, That whatsoever he was that was taken stealing their Cloth, might presently wthout any further tryall be hanged up. When the day of their appearance approached, the Clothiers came before the King, and deliuered vp their petition in writing, which his Maiestie most graciously perusing, said, hee was ready to fulfill their request: and therefore for the first point of their Petition, he called for a staffe to be brought him, and measuring thereupon the iust length of his owne arme, deliuered it to the Clothiers, saying, This measure shall be called a yard, and no other measure thorowout all the Realme of England shall be vsed for the same, and by this shall men buy and sell, and we will so prouide, that whosoeuer he be that abuseth our subiects by any false measure, that he shall not onely pay a fine for the same to the King, but also haue his body punished by imprisonment. And as concerning the second point of your Petition, because of my sudden departure out of the Land, I know not better how to ease you of this grieve (of crackt money) this Deere I make, because they account crackt money not currant, I say, none shall be currant but crackt money. And therefore I will giue present charge, that all the money thorow the Land shall be slit, and so you shall suffer no losse.

But now for your last request for the Towne of Halifax ; where by theeeues your Clothes are so often stolne from you, seeing the Lawes already prouided in

that case, are not sufficient to keepe men in awe, it is indeed high time to haue sharper punishment for them.

With that Hodgekins vnmannerly interrupted the King, saying in broad Northerne speech, Yea gude faith, mai Liedg, the faule eule of mai saule, gift any thing will keepe them whiat, till the karles be hanged by the cragge. What the dule care they for boaring their eyne, sea lang as they may gae groping vp and downe the Country like fause lizar lownes, begging and craking ?

The King smiling to heare this rough-hewne fellow make this reply : Content thee Hodgekins, for we will have redresse for all : and albeit that hanging of men was never seene in England, yet seeing the corrupt world is growne more bold in all wickednesse, I thinke it not amisse to ordain this death for such malefactors : and peculiarly to the towne of Halifax I giue this priuilege, That whosoever they finde stealing their Cloth, being taken with the goods, that without further iudgement, they shall be hanged vp.

Thus (said our King) I haue granted what you request, and if hereafter you find any other thing that may be good for you, it shall be granted ; for no longer would I desire to liue among you, then I have care for the good of the Common-wealth : at which words ended, the king rose from his Royall Throne, while the Clothiers on their knees prayed for both his health, and happy successe, and shewed themselves most thankefull for his Highnesses fauour. His Maiestic bending his body

towards them, that at his home returne, hee would (by the grace of God) visit them.

How the Clothiers had prouided a sumptuous feast for the Kings sonnes, Prince William and Prince Robert, at Gerards Hall ; shewing also what chance befell Cutbert of Kendall at that same instant. Chap. 5.

THE Clothiers departing from the Court in a merry mind, ioyfull of their good successe, each one to other praised and magnified the Kings great wisedome and vertue, commanding also his affability and gentle disposition, so that Hodgekins affirmed on his faith, that hee had rather speake to his Kings Maiestie, then to many Justees of peace. Indeed (said Cole) he is a most mild and mercifull Prince, and I pray God he may long raigne over vs. Amen said the rest.

Then said Cole, My Masters, shall we forget the great courtesie of the Kings sonnes, those sweet and gentle Princes, that still showed us fauour in our suite ? in my opinion, it were reason to gratifie them in some sort, that we may not vtterly bee condemned of ingratitude wherefore (if you thinke good) we will prepare a banquet for them at our Oast Garrats, who as you know, hath a faire house, and goodly roomes : Besides, the man himselfe is a most courageous mind and good behauour, sufficient to entertain a Prince ; his wife also is a dainty fine Cooke : all which considered, I know not a fitter place in London. Tis true, quoth Sutton, and if the rest be content, I am pleased it shall be so. At

this they all answered, Yea, for quoth they, it will not be passing forty shillings a piece, and that we shall recouer iu our crackt money.

Being thus agreed, the feast was prepared. Tom Doue, quoth they, we will commit the prouiding of musicke to thee: and I, said Cole, will invite diuers of our Merchants and their wiues to the same. That is well remembred, said Gray. Upon this they called to the Oast and Oastesse, shewing their determination, who most willingly said, all things should be made ready, but I would haue two dayes liberty, said the goodwife, to prepare my house and other things. Content, said the Clothiers, in the meane space we will bid our guests, and dispatch our other affaires. But Simon of Southampton charged his Oastesse, that in any case she should not forget to make good store of pottage. It shall be done, quoth she.

It is to be remeinbred, that while this preparation was in hand, that Cutb. of Kendall had not forgot his kindnes to his Oastesse of Bosomes Inne. Therefore finding time conuenient when her husband was ouerseeing his hay-makers, hee greeted ber in this sort, Sweet Oastesse, though I were the last time I was in towne, ouer-bold with you, yet I hope it was not so offensiuie to you, as you made shew for. Bold, my Cutbert? quoth she, thou hast vowed thy selfe my seruant: and so being, you are not to bee blamed for doing what I wild you. By my honesty, I could not chuse but smile to my selfe, so soone as I was out of their sight, to thinke how

prettily you began to brabble. But now, quoth he, we will change our chidings to kissings, and it vexeth me that these cherry lipps should be subiect to such a Lobcocke as thy husband.

Subiect to him, quoth she: In faith sir, no, I will haue my lips at as much liberty as my tongue, the one to say what I list, and the other to touch whom I like: In troth, shall I tell thee, Cutbert, the churles breath smels so strong, that I care as much for kissing of him, as for looking on him: it is such a mis-shapen mizer, and such a bundle of beastlinesse, that I can neuer thinke on him without spitting. Fie vpon him, I would my friends had carried me to my graue, when they went with me to the Church, to make him my husband. And so shedding a few dissembling teares, she stopt. What, my sweet Mistresse (quoth he) weepe you? Nay sit downe by my side, and I will sing thee one of my Countrey Iigges to make thee merry. Wilt thou in faith (quoth shee?) Yes verily, said Cuthbert: and in troth, quoth she, if you fall a-singing I will sing with you. That is well you can so suddenly change your notes, quoth Cutbert, then haue at it.

MAN. Long haue I lou'd this bonny Lasse,
Yet durst not shew the same.

WOM. Therein you prove your selfe an Asse,

MAN. I was the more to blame.

Yet still will I remaine to thee,

Trang dilly do, trang dilly:

Thy friend and louer secretly,

WOM. Thou art my owne sweet bully.

MAN. But when shall I enioy thee,
 delight of thy faire loue ?

WOM. Euen when thou seest that fortune doth
 all manner lets remoue.

MAN. O, I will fold thee in my armes,
 Trang dilly do, trang dilly,
 And keepe thee so from sudden harues.

WOM. Thou art my owne sweet bully.

WOM. My husband he is gone from home,
 you know it very well.

MAN. But when will he returne againe ?

WOM. In truth I cannot tell.

If long he keepe him out of sight,
 Trang dilly do, trang dilly.
Be sure thou shalt haue thy delight.

MAN. Thou art my bonny lassie.

While they were singing this song, her husband being on a sudden come home, stood secretly in a corner and heard all, and blessing himselfe with both his hands, said, O abominable dissimulation, monstrous hypocrisie, and are you in this humour? can you brawle together and sing together? Well, qd. hee, I will let them alone, to see a little more of their knauery. Neuer did Cat watch Mouse so narrowly, as I will watch them: And so going into the kitchin, he asked his wife if it were not dinner time. Euen by and by, husband (quoth she) the meat will be ready. Presently after comes in Hodgekins and Martin, who straight asked for Cutbert of

Kendall. Answer was made, that he was in his chamber. So when they had called him, they went to dinner: then they requested that their Oast and Oastesse would sit with them.

Husband, said she, you may goe if you please: but as for me, I will desire pardon. Nay, good-wife, goe vp, said her husband. What woman, you must beare with your guests. Why husband, qd. she, doe you thinke that any can beare the flirts and fromps, which that Northerne tike gaue me the last time he was in towne; now God forgiue me, I had as liefe see the diuell as to see him: therefore good husband goe vp your selfe, and let me alone, for in faith, I shall neuer abide that Jacke while I liue. Upon these words away went her husband, and though he said little, he thought the more. Now when he came vp, his guests bade him welcome. I pray you sit downe, good mine Oast, quoth they, where is your wife? What will she sit with vs? No verily, said he, the foolish woman hath taken such a displeasure against Cutbert, that she sweares she will neuer come in his company. Is it so, said the other? then trust me we are well agreed: and I sweare by my fathers sale, qd. hee, that were it not meete for good will to you, then loue to her, I would neuer come to your house meere. I beleue it well, said old Bosome. And so with other communication they droue out the time, till dinner was ended.

After they were risen, Martin and Hodgekins got them forth about their affaires, but Cutb. tooke his Oast

by the hand, saying, My Oast, Ile goe talke with your wife ; for my part I thought we had bin friends : but seeing her stomacke is so big, and her heart so great, I will see what she will say to me ; and with that he stept into the kitchin, saying, God speed you Oastis. It must be when you are away then, said she. What is your reason, said the other ? Because God neuer comes where knaues are present. Gip goodly draggletaile, qd. he, had I such a wife, I would present her tallow-face to the deuill for a candle. With that she bent her browes, and like a Fury of hell began to flie at him, saying, Why you gag-tooth Jacke, you blinking companion, get thee out of my kitchin quickly, or with my powdred beefe-broth, I will make your pate as bald as a Fryers.

- Get me gone, quoth he? thou shalt not bid me twice : out you durty heeles, you will make your husbands haire growe thorow his hood I doubt : and with that he got him into the Hall, and sat him downe on the bench by his Oast, to whom he said : 'Tis pittie, my Oast, that your aged yeeres that loues quietnesse, should be troubled with such a scolding queane. I, God helpe me, God helpe me, quoth the old man, and so went towards the stable : which his wife watching, suddenly stept out and gaue Cutbert a kisse.

Within an houre after, the old man craftily called for his Nag to ride to field : but as soone as he was gone, Cutbert and his Oastesse were such good friends, that they got into one of Ware-houses, and lockt the doore to them : but her husband hauing set a spie for the purpose,

suddenly turned backe, and called for a capcase which lay in the Warehouse. The seruant could not find the key by any meanes. Whereupon hee called to haue the locke broke open. Which they within hearing, opened the doore of their owne accord. So soone as her husband espied her in that place, with admiration he said : O passion of my heart, what doe you here ? what, you two that cannot abide one another ? what make you so close together ? is your chiding and rayling, brabling, and brauling, come to this ? O what dissemlers are these ! Why, my Oast, qd. Cutbert, what need you take the matter so hot ? I gaue a Cheese to my Country-man Hodgekins, to lay vp, and deliuered it to your wife to be keept ; and then is it not reason, that she should come and seeke me my Cheese ? O, quoth the old man, belike the dore was lockt, because the Cheese should not runaway. The doore said his wife vnknowne to vs clapt to it selfe, and hauing a spring locke, was presently fast. Well, huswife, qd. he, I will giue you as much credit as a Crocadile, but as for your companion, I will teach him to come hither to looke Cheeses.

And with that he caused his men to take him presently, and to bind him hand and foot. Which being done, they drew him vp in a basket into the smoky louer of the hall, and there they did let him hang all that night, euен till the next day dinner time, when he should haue beene at the banquet with the Princes : for neither Hodgekins nor Martin could intreat their inflamed Oast to let him downe.

And in such a heate was hee driuen with drawing him vp, that he was faine to cast off his gownes, his coates, and two paire of his stockings, to coole himselfe, making a vow he should hang there seuen yeeres, except the Kings sons came in person to beg his pardon, which most of all grieued Cutb. When Cole and the rest of the Westerne-Yeomen heard hereof, they could not chuse but laugh, to thinke that he was so taken tardy.

The young Princes hauing giuen promise to be with the clothiers, kept their houre, but when all the rest went to giue them entertainment, Simon was so busie in supping his pottage, that he could not spare so much time. Which when the Princes saw, with a smiling countenance they said, Sup Simon, theres good broth : or else beshrew our Oastesse, quoth he, neuer looking behind him to see who spake, till the Prince clapt him on the shoulder. But good Lord, how blanke he was when hee spied them, knowing not how to excuse the matter.

Well, the Princes hauing ended their banquet, Garrat comes and with one of his hands tooke the table of sixteene foote long quite from the ground ouer their heads, from before the Princes, and set it on the other side of the hall, to the great admiration of all them that beheld it.

The Princes being then ready to depart, the Clothiers moued them in pleasant maner, to be good to one of their company, that did neither sit, lie, nor stand. Then hee must needs hang, qd. the Princes. And so he doth,

most excellent Princees, qd. they ; and therewithall told them the whole matter. When they heard the storie, downe to Bosomes Inne they goe, where looking vp into the roofe, spied poore Cutbert pinned vp in a basket, and almost smoaked to death, who although hee were greatly ashamed, yet most pitifully desired that they would get him release.

What is his trespassse, said the Prince ? Nothing if it shall like your Grace, qd. he, but for looking for a cheese : But hee could not find it without my wife, said the good-man : the villaine had lately dined with mutton, and could not digest his meate without cheese, for which cause I haue made him to fast these twenty houres, to the end he may haue a better stomacke to eate his dinner, then to vse dalliance.

Let me intreate you, quoth the Prince, to release him : and if euer hereafter you catch him in the corne, clappe him in the pownd. Your Grace shall request or command any thing at my hand, said the old man : and so Cutbert was let downe vnbound, but when he was loose, he vowed neuer to come within that house more. And it is said, the old man Bosome ordained, that in remembrance of this deed, euery yeere once all such as came thither to aske for cheeses, should be so serued : which thing is to this day kept.

How Simons wife of Southampton, being wholly bent to pride and pleasure, requested her husband to see London, which being granted, how she got good-wife Sutton of Salisbury to goe with her, who tooke Crab to go along with them, and how he prophecie of many things. Chap. 6.

THE Clothiers being all come from London, Suttons* wife of South-hampton, who was with her husband very mery and pleasant, brake her mind vnto him in this sort :

Good Lord, husband, will you neuer be so kind as let me goe to London with you? shall I be pend vp in South-hampton, like a Parrat in a cage, or a Capon in a coope? I would request no more of you in lieu of all my paines, carke and care, but to haue one weeks time to see that faire City: what is this life, if it be not mixt with some delight? and what delight is more pleasing then to see the fashions and maners of vnknowne places? Therefore good husband, if thou louest me deny not this simple request. You know I am no common gadder, nor haue oft troubled you with trauell. God knowes, this may be the last thing that euer I shall request at your hands.

Woman, quoth he, I would willingly satisfie your desire, but you know it is not conuenient for both of vs to be abroad, our charge is so great, and therefore our care ought not no † be small. If you will goe your selfe, one of my men shall goe with you, and money enough

* Qu. Simon's.

† Qu. to.

you shall haue in your purse: but to goe with you my selfe, you see my businesse will not permit me.

Husband, said she, I accept your gentle offer, and it may be I shall intreat my gossip Sutton to goe along with me. I shall be glad qd. her husband, prepare your selfe when you will.

When she had obtained this licence, she sent her man Welsell to Salisbury, to know of good-wife Sutton if shee would keepe her company to London. Suttons wife being as willing to goe, as she was to request, neuer rested till she had gotten leaue of her husband; the which when she had obtained, casting in her mind their pleasure would bee small, being but they twaine: thereupon the wily woman sent letters by collericke Crabbe her man, both to Grayes wife, and Fitzallens wife, that they would meet them at Reading, who liking well of the match, consented, and did so prouide, that they met according to promise at Reading, and from thence with Coles wife they went all together, with each of them a man to London, each one taking vp their lodging with a seuerall friend.

When the Merchants of London vnderstood they were in towne, they inuited them euery day home to their owne houses, where they had delicate good cheere: and when they went abroad to see the commodities of the City, the Merchants wiues euer bore them company, being attired most dainty and fine: which when the Clothiers wiues did see, it grieued their hearts they had not the like.

Now, when they were brought into Cheap-side, there with great wonder they beheld the shops of the Goldsmiths; and on the other side, the wealthy Mercers, whose shops shined with all sorts of coloured silkes: in Watling-street they viewed the great number of Drapers: in Saint Martins, Shoomakers: at Saint Nicholas Church, the flesh shambles: at the end of the old Change, the Fish-mongers: in Candleweek-street, the Weauers: then came into the Iewes-street, where all the Iewes did inhabite: then came they to Blackwel-hall, where the Country Clothiers did vse to meete.

Afterwards they proceeded, and came to S. Pauls Church, whose steeple was so hie, that it seemed to pierce the clowdes, on the top whereof, was a great and mighty Weather-cocke, of cleane siluer, the which notwithstanding seemed as small as a sparrow to mens eyes, it stood so exceeding high, the which goodly Weather-cocke was afterwards stolne away, by a cunning Cripple, who found meanes one night to clime vp to the top of the steeple, and tooke it downe: with the which, and a great summe of money which he had got together by begging in his life time, he builded a gate on the North side of the City, which to this day is called Cripplegate.

From thence they went to the Tower of London, which was builded by Iulius Cæsar, who was Emperour of Rome. And there they beheld salt and wine, which had lyen there cuer since the Romanes inuaded this Land, which was many yeeres before our Sauiour Christ was

borne, the wine was growne so thicke, that it might haue beeene cut like a Ielly. And in that place also they saw the money that was made of leather, which in ancient time went currant amongst the people.

When they had to their great contention beheld all this, they repaired to their lodgings, hauing also a sumptuous supper ordained for them, with all delight that might be. And you shall vnderstand, that when the Country Weauers, which came up with their dames, saw the Weauers of Candlewike-street, they had great desire presently to haue some conference with them ; and thus one began to challenge the other for worke-manship : quoth Weasell, Ile worke with any of you all for a crowne, take if you dare, and he that makes his yard of cloth soonest, shall haue it. You shall be wrought withall, said the other, and if it were for ten crownes : but we will make this bargaine, that each of vs shall winde their owne quilles. Content, quoth Weasell: and so to worke they went, but Weasell lost. Whereupon another of them tooke the matter in hand, who lost likewise: so that the London Weauers triumphed against the Country, casting forth diuers frumps.

Alas poore fellowes, quoth they, your hearts are good, but your hands are ill. Tush, the fault was in their legs, quoth another, pray you friend, were you not borne at home? Why doe you aske, quoth Weasell? Because, said hee, the biggest place of your legge is next to your shooe.

Crab hearing this, being Cholericke of nature, chafed

like a man of Law at the Barre, and he wagers with them four crownes to twaine: the others agreed, to worke they go: but Crab conquered them all. Whereupon the London Weauers were nipt in the head like birds, and had not a word to say.

Now, saith Crab, as we haue lost nothing, so you haue wonne nothing, and because I know you cannot be right Weauers, except you be good-fellowes, therefore if you will goe with vs, we will bestow the Ale vpon you. That is spoken like a good-fellow and like a Weauer, quoth the other. So along they went as it were to the signe of the red Crosse.

When they were set downe, and had drunke well, they began merrily to prattle, and to extoll Crab to the skies. Whereupon Crab protested, that hee would come and dwell among them. Nay, that must not be, said a London Weauer: the King hath giuen vs priuiledge, that none should liue among us, but such as serue seuen yeeres in London. With that Crab, according to his old maner of prophesying, said thus:

The day is very neere at hand,
When as the King of this faire Land,
Shal priuiledge you more then so:
Then Weauers shall in skarlet goe.

And to one brotherhood be brought,
The first is in London wrought,
When other Trades-men by your fame.
Shall couet all to doe the same.

Then shall you all liue wondrous well,
But this one thing I shall you tell:
The day will come before the doome,
In Candleweek-street shall stand no loome.

Nor any Weauer dwelling there,
But men that shall more credit beare :
For Clothing shall be sore decayde,
And men vndone that vse that trade.

And yet the day some men shall see,
This trade againe shall raised be.
When as Bayliffe of Sarum towne ;
Shall buy and purchase Bishops downe.

When there neuer man did sow,
Great store of goodly corne shall grow ;
And Woad, that makes all colours sound,
Shall spring vpon that barren ground.

At that same day I tell you plaine,
Who so aliueth then remaine,
A proper Maiden they shall see,
Within the towne of Salisburie,

Of fauour sweet, and nature kind,
With goodly eyes, and yet starke blind,
This poore blind Maiden I do say,
In age shall goe in rich aray.

And he that takes her to his wife,
Shall lead a ioyfull happy life,
The wealthiest Clothier shall he be,
That euer was in that Country.

But clothing kept as it hath beene,
In London neuer shall be seene :
For Weauers then the most shall win,
That worke for clothing next the skin.

Till pride the Common-wealthe doth peele,
And causeth huswiues leaue their wheele.
Then pouerty vpon each side,
Vnto those workemen shall betide.

At that time, from Eagles nest,
That proudly builded in the West,
A sorte shall come with cunning hand,
To bring strange weauing in this Land,

And by their gaines that great will fall,
They shall maintaine the Weauers Hall :
But long they shall not flourish so,
But folly will them ouerthrow.

And men shall count it mickle shame,
To beare that kind of Weauers name,
And this as sure shall come to passe,
As here is Ale within this glasse.

When the silly soules that sate about him heard him speake in this sort, they admired, and honoured Crabbe for the same. Why my masters, said Weasell, doe you wonder at these words? he will tell you twenty of these tales, for which cause we call him our canuas Prophet: his attire fits his title, said they, and we neuer heard the like in our liues: and if this should be true, it would be strange. Doubt not but it will be true, qd. Weasell;

for Ile tell you what, he did but once see our Nicke kisse Nel, and presently he powred out this rime:

That kisse, O Nell, God giue thee ioy,
Will nine months hence breed thee a boy.

And Ile tell you what, you shall heare: we kept reckoning, and it fell out iust as Iones buttockes on a close stoole, for which cause our maids durst neuer kisse a man in his sight; vpon this they broke company, and went euery one about his business, the London Weauers to their frames, and the Country fellowes to their Dames, who after their great banqueting and merriment, went euery one home to their owne houses, though with lesse money than they brought out, yet with more pride.

Especially Simons wife of South-hampton, who told the rest of her gossips, that she saw no reason, but that their husbands should maintaine them, as well as the Merchants did their wiues: for I tell you what, quoth she, we are as proper women (in my conceit,) as the proudest of them all, as handsome of body, as faire of face, our legs as well made, and our feet as fine: then what reason is there (seeing our husbands are of as good wealth,) but we should be as well maintained.

You say true gossip, said Suttous wife: trust me, it made me blush, to see them braue it out so gallantly, and wee to goe so homely: but before God said the other, I will haue my husband to buy me a London gowne, or in faith he shall haue little quiet: so shall mine said another: and mine too, qd. the third: and all of them

sing the same note: so that when they came home, their husbands had little to doe: Especially Simon, whose wife daily lay at him for London apparell, to whome he said, Good woman, be content, let us goe according to our place and ability: what will the Bailiffes thinke, if I should prancke thee up like a peacocke, and thou in thy attire surpassee their wiues? they would either thinke I were mad, or else that I had more money than I could well vse, consider, I pray thee good wife, that such as are in their youth masters, doe proue in their age starke beggars.

Beside that, it is enough to raise me vp in the kings booke, for many times, mens coffers are iudged by their garments: why, we are Country folks, and must keepe our selues in good compasse: gray russet, and good hempe-spun cloth doth best become vs; I tell thee wife, it were as vndecent for vs to goe like Londoners as it is for Londoners to goe like courtiers.

What a coyle keepe you, quoth she? are not we Gods creatures as well as Londoners? and the kings subiects, as well as they? then finding our wealth to be as good as theirs, why should we not goe as gay as Londoners? No, husband, no, here is the fault, wee are kept without it, onely because our husband be not so kind as Londoners: why man, a cobler there keepes his wife better then the best Clothier in this Countrey: nay, I will affirme it, that the London Oyster-wiues, and the very kitchin-stuffe cryers, doe exceed vs in their Sundaies attire: nay, more then that, I did see the Water-bearers

wife which belongs to one of our Merchants, come in with a Tankerd of Water on her shoulder, and yet halfe a dozen gold rings on her fingers. You may then thinke, wife (quoth he) she got them not with idlenesse.

But wife, you must consider what London is, the chiefe and capitall City of all the Land, a place on the which all strangers cast their eyes, it is (wife) the Kings Chamber and his Maiesties royall seate: to that City repaires all Nations vnder heauen. Therefore it is most meete and conuenient, that the Citizens of such a City should not goe in their apparcll like peasants, but for the credit of our Country, weare such seemely habits, as doe carry grauity and comelinesse in the eyes of all beholders. But if wee of the Country went so (quoth she) were it not as great credit for the Land as the other? Woman, qd. her husband, it is altogether needlesse, and in diuers respects it may not be. Why then, I pray you, quoth she, let us go dwell at London. A word soone spoken, said her husband, but not so easie to be performed: therefore wife, I pray thee hold thy prating, for thy talk is foolish: yea, yea husband, your old churlish conditions will neuer be left, you keepe me heere like a drudge and a droile, and so you may keepe your money in your purse, you care not for your credit, but before I will goe so like a shepheardesse, I will first goe naked: and I tell you plaine, I scorne it greatly, that you should clap a gray gowne on my backe, as if I had not brought you two pence: before I was married, you swore I should haue any thing that I requested, but

now all is forgotten. And in saying this, she went in, and soone after she was so sicke, that needes she must goe to bed: and when she was laid, she draue out that night with many grieuous groanes, sighing and sobbing, and no rest she could take God wot. And in the morning when shee should rise, the good soule fell downe in a swowne, which put her maidens in a great flight, who running downe to their master, cryed out; Alas, alas, our Dame is dead, our Dame is dead. The good-man hearing this, ran vp in all hast and there fell to rubbing and chafing of her temples, sending for aqua vitae, and saying, Ah my sweet-heart, speake to me, good-wife, alacke, alacke: call in the neighbours, you queanes, quoth he. With that she left vp her head, fetching a great groane, and presently swouned againe, and much a doe ywis, he had to keepe life in her: but when she was come to her selfe, How dost thou wife, qd. he? What wilt thou haue? for Gods sake tell me if thou hast a mind to any thing, thou shalt haue it. Away dissembler (qd. she) how can I beleeve thee? thou hast said to me as much a hundred times, and deceiued me, it is thy churlishnesse that hath killed my heart, neuer was woman matcht to so vnkind a man.

Nay, good-wife, blame me not without cause; God knoweth how heartily I loue thee. Loue me? no, no, thou didst neuer carry my loue but on the tip of thy tongue, quoth she, I dare sweare thou desirdest nothing so much as my death, and for my part, I would to God thou hadst thy desire; but be content, I shall not trouble

thee long ; and with that fetching a sigh, shee swouned and gaue a great groane: The man seeing her in this case, was woundrous woe : but so soone as they had recovered her, he said, O my deare wife, if any bad conceit hath engendered this sickenesse, let me know it; or if thou knowst any thing that may procure thy health, let me vnderstand thereof, and I protest thou shalt haue it, if it cost me all that euer I haue.

O husband, quoth she, how may I credit your words, when for a paltry sute of apparell you denied me? Well, wife, quoth he, thou shalt haue apparell or any thing else thou wilt request, if God send thee once health. O husband, if I may find you so kind, I shall thinke my selfe the happiest woman in the world, thy words haue greatly comforted my heart, mee thinketh if I had it, I could drinke a good draught of Renish wine. Well, wine was sent for : O Lord, said she, that I had a piece of a chicken, I feele my stomache desirous of some meate : Glad am I of that, said her husband, and so the woman within a few dayes after was very well.

But you shall vnderstand, that her husband was faine to dresse her London-like, ere he could get her quiet, neither would it please her except the stiffe was bought in Cheapside: for out of Cheapside nothing would content her, were it neuer so good: insomuch, that if she thought a Taylor of Cheapside made not her gowne, she would swearc it were quite spoiled.

And hauing thus wonne her husband to her will,

when the rest of the Clothiers wiues heard thereof, they would be suted in the like sort too : so that euer since, the wiues of South-hampton, Salisbury, of Gloucester, Worcester, and Reading, went all as gallant and as braue as any Londoners wiues.

How the Clothiers sent the King aide into France, and how he ouercame his brother Robert, and brought him into England, and how the Clothiers feasted his Maiesty and his sonne at Reading. Chap. 7.

THE Kings Maiestie being at the warres in France, against Lewis the French King, and Duke Robert of Normaudy, sending for diuers supplies of Souldiers out of England, the Clothiers at their owne proper cost set out a great number, and sent them ouer to the King.

Which Roger Bishop of Salisbury, who gouerned the Realme in the Kings absence, did certifie the King thereof, with his letters written in their commendations.

And afterwards it came to passe, that God sent his Highnes victory ouer his enemies, and hauing taken his brother prisoner, brought him most ioyfully with him into England, and appointed him to be kept in Cardife Castle prisoner, yet with this fauour, that he might hunt and hawke where he would, vp and downe the Country, and in this sorte hee liued a good while, of whom we will speake more at large hereafter.

The King being thus come home, after his Winters rest, he made his Summers progresse into the West-country, to take a view of all the chiefe Townes :

whereof the Clothiers being aduertised, they made great preparation against his comming, because he had promised to visit them all.

And when his Grace came to Reading, he was entertained and receiued with great ioy and triumph : Thomas Cole being the chiefe man of regard in all the Towne, the King honored his house with his Princely presence, where during the Kings abode, he, and his sonne, and Nobles were highly feasted.

There the King beheld the great number of people, that was by that one man maintained in worke, whose hearty affection and loue toward his Maiestie did well appeare, as well by their outward countenances, as their gifts presented vnto him. But of Cole himselfe the King was so well perswaded, that he committed such trust in him, and put him in great authority in the Towne. Furthermore the King said, That for the loue which those people bore him liuing, that hee would lay his bones among them when he was dead. For I know not, said he, where they may be better bestowed, till the blessed day of resurrection, then among these my friends which are like to be happy partakers of the same.

Whereupon his Maiesty caused there to be builded a most goodly and famous Abbey: in which he might shew his deuotion to God, by increasing his seruice, and leauie example to other his successors to doe the like. Likewise within the towne he after builded a faire and goodly Castle, in the which he often kept his Court,

which was a place of his chiefe residence during his life, saying to the Clothiers, that seeing he found them such faithfull subiects, he would be their neighbour, and dwell among them.

After his Maiesties Royall feasting at Reading, he proceeded in progresse, till he had visited the whole West-countries, being wondrously delighted, to see those people so diligent to apply their businesse: and coming to Salisbury, the Bishop receiued his Maiesty with great ioy, and with triumph attened on his Grace to his Palace, where his Highnesse lodged.

There Sutton the Clothier presented his Highnesse with a broad cloth, of so fine a thread, and exceeding good workmanship, and therewithall of so faire a colour, as his Grace gaue commendation thereof, and as it is said, he held it in such high estimation, that thereof he made his Parliament robes, and the first Parliament that was euer in England, was graced with the Kings person in those robes, in requitall whereof his Highness afterward yeelded Sutton many princely fauours.

And it is to be remembred, that Simon of Southhampton (seeing the King had ouerpast the place where he dwelt) came with his wife and seruants to Salisbury, and against the K. going forth of that City, hee caused a most pleasant arbour to be made vpon the toppe of the hill leading to Salisburie, beset all with red and white roses, in such sort, that not any part of the timber could be seene, within the which sat a maiden attired like a Queen, attened on by a faire traine of

maidens, who at the Kings approach presented him with a garland of sweet flowres, yeelding him such honour as the Ladies of Rome were wont to doe to their Princes after their victories: which the King tooke in gracious part, and for his farewell from that Country, they bore him company ouer part of the Plaine, with the sound of diuers sweet instruments of musicke. All which when his Grace vnderstood was done at the cost of a Clothier, he said he was the most honoured by those men, aboue all the meane subiects in his Land: and so his Highness past on to Exeter, hauing giuen great rewards to these maidens.

Tomas Doue and the residue of the Clothiers, against his Graces comming thither, had ordained diuers sumptuous shews; first, there was one that presented the person of Augustus Cesar the Emperour, who commanded after the Romane inuasion, that their City should be called Augustus, after his owne name, which before time was called Isca, and of later yeeres, Exeter.

There his Maiesty was royally feasted seuen dayes together, at the onely cost of Clothiers, but the diuers delightes and sundry pastimes which they made there before the King, and his Nobles, is too long here to be rehearsed, and therefore I will ouerpasse them to auoid tediousnesse.

His Grace then coasting along the Country, at last came to Gloucester, an ancient City, which was builded by Gloue, a Brittish King, who named it after his owne name, Gloucester. Here was his Maiesty entertained by

Gray the Clothier, who profest himselfe to be of that
ancient family of Grayes, whose first originall issued out
of that ancient and Honorable Castle and Towne of
Rithiu.

Here was the King most bountifully feasted, hauing
in his company his brother Robert (although his pri-
soner the same time.) And his Grace being desirous to
see the Maidens card and spinne, they were of purpose
set to their worke: among whom was faire Margaret
with her white hand, whose excellent beauty hauing
piere't the eyes of the amorous Duke, it made such an
impression in his heart, that afterward he could neuer
forget her: and so vehemently was his affection kindled,
that he could take no rest, till by writing he had be-
wrayed his minde: but of this we will speake more in
another place: and the King at his departure said, that
to gratifie them, hee would make his sonne Robert
their Earle, who was the first Earle that euer was in
Glocester.

Now when his Grace was come from thence, he went
to Worcester, where William Fitzallen made prepara-
tion in all honourable sort to receiue him, which man
being borne of great parentage, was not to learne how
to entertaine his Maiestie, being descended of that famous
Family, whose patrimony lay about the Towne of
Oswestrie, which Towne his predecessors had inclosed
with stately walls of stone.

Although aduerse fortune had so grieuously frowned
on some of them, that their children were faine to be-

come Tradesmen, whose hands were to them in stead of lands, notwithstanding God raised againe the fame of this man, both by his great wealth, and also in his posterity, whose eldest son Henry, the Kings god-son, became afterward the Maior of London, who was the first Maior that euer was in that City, who gouerned the same 23 yeeres: and then his son Roger Fitz-allen was the second Maior.

The princely pleasures that in Worcester were shewn the King, were many and maruelous, and in no place had his Maiesty receiued more delight then here: for the which at his departure he did shew himselfe very thankefull. Now when his Grace had thus taken view of all his good townes Westward, and in that progresse had visited these Clothiers, he returned to London, with great ioy of his Commons.

How Hodgekins of Hallifax came to the Court, and complained to the King, that his priuiledge was nothing worth, because when they found any offender, they could not get a hangman to execute him: and how by a Fryer a gin was deuised to chop off mens heads of it selfe. Chap. 8.

AFTER that Hodgkins had got the priuiledge for the towne of Halifax, to hang vp such theeuers as stole their cloth in the night, presently without any further iudgement, all the Clothiers of the towne were exceeding glad, and perswaded themselues, that now their goods would be safe all night, without watching them at all,

so that whereas before, the town maintained certaine watchmen to keepe their cloth by night, they were hereupon dismissed as a thing needlesse to be done, supposing with themselues, that seeing they should be straight hanged that were found faulty in this point, that no man would be so desperate to enterprise any such act. And indeed the matter being noysed through the whole Country, that they were straight to be hanged that vse such theeuery, it made many lewd liuers to restraine such theeuery.

Neuertheles, there was at that same time liuing, a notable Theefe named Wallis, whom in the north they called Mighty Wallis, in regard of his valour and man-hood : This man being most subtile in such kind of knauery, hauing heard of this late priuiledge, and therewithall of the Townes security, said that once he would venture his necke for a packe of Northerne cloth : and therefore comming to one or two of his companions, he asked if they would be partners in his adventure, and if (quoth he) you will herein hazard your bodies, you shall be sharers in all our booties.

At length by many perswasions the men consented : whereupon late in the night, they got them all into a Farriours shop, and called vp the folkes of the house. What the foule ill wald you haue (quoth they) at this time of the night ? Wallis answered, saying, Good-fellowes, we would haue you to remoue the shooes of our horses feete, and set them on againe, and for your paines you shall be well pleased. The Smith at length

was perswaded, and when he had plukt off all the shooes from their horses feete, they would needes haue them all set on againe, quite contrary with the cakin forward, that should stand backward. How? fay, fay man, qd. the Smith, are ye like fules? what the deele doe you meane to breake your crags? gud faith I tro the men be wood. Not so, Smith, qd. they, do thou as we bid thee, and thou shalt haue thy mony; for it is an old prouerbe,

Be it better, or be it worse,

Please you the man that beares the purse.

Gudd faith and see I sall, qd. the Smith, and so did as hee was willed. When Wallis had thus caused their horses to be shod, to Hallifax they went, where they without any let, laded their horses with cloth, and so departed contrary way.

In the morning, so soone as the Clothiers came to the field, they found that they were robd, whereupon one ranne to another to tell these things. Now when Hodgekins heard thereof, rising vp in haste, he wild his neighbors to mark and to see, if they could not descry either the foot-steppes of men or Horses. Which being done, they perceiued that horses had beene there, and seeking to pursue them by their foot-steppes, they went a cleane contrary way, by reason that the horses were shodde backward: and when in vaine they had long pursued them, they returned, being neuer the neere. Now Wallis vsed his feate so long, that at length he was

taken, and two more with him: whereupon according to the priuilege of the Towne, they put Halters about the theeuues neckes presently to hang them vp.

When they were come to the place appointed, Wallis and the rest being out of hope to escape death, prepared themselues patiently to suffer the rigor of the Law. And therewith the rest laying open the lewdnesse of his life, grieuously lamenting for his sinnes, at length commanding their soules to God, they yeelded their bodies to the graue, with which sight the people were greatly mooued with pity, because they had neuer seene men come to hanging before: but when they should haue beene tyed vp, Hodgekins willed one of his neighbours to play the Hang-mans part, who would not by any meanes doe it, although he was a very poore man, who for his paines should haue beene possest of all their apparell. When he would not yeeld to the office, one of those which had his cloth stolen, was commanded to doe the deed; but he in like manner would not, saying: When I haue the skill to make a man, I will hang a man, if it chance my workmanship doe not like me.

And thus from one to another, the office of the Hang-man was posted off. At last a Rogue came by, whom they would haue compelled to haue done that deed. Nay, my masters, qd. he, not so: but as you haue got a priuiledge for the Towne, so you were best to procure a Commission to make a hang-man, or else you are like to be without one for me. Neighbor

Hodgkins quoth one, I pray you doe this office your selfe, you haue had most losse, and therefore you should be the most ready to hang them your selfe. No, not I (quoth Hodgkins,) though my losse were ten times greater then it is, notwithstanding look which of these Theeues will take vpon him to hang the other, shall haue his life saued, otherwise they shall all to prison till I can prouide a hangman.

When Wallis saw the matter brought to this passe, he began stoutly to reply, saying, My masters of the Towne of Halifax, though your priuiledge stretch to hang men vp presently that are found stealing of your goods, yet it giues you no warrant to imprison them till you prouide them a hang-man, my selfe, with these my fellowes, haue here yeelded our selues to satisfie the Law, and if it be not performed, the fault is yours, and not ours, and therefore we humbly take our leauue: from the gallowes the xviii of August. And with that he leapt from the ladder, and hurl'd the halter at Hodgkins face.

When the Clothiers saw this, they knew not what to say, but taking them by the sleevees, entreated to haue their owne againe. Not so, qd. Wallis, you get not the value of a packe or a bawby: wee haue stolne your cloth, then why doe you not hang vs? here we haue made our selues ready, and if you will not hang vs, chuse. A plague vpon you, quoth he, you haue hindred me God knowes what, I made account to dine this day in heauen, and you keepe me here on earth where there

is not a quarter of that good cheare. The foule euill take you all, I was fully prouided to giue the gallowes a boxe on the care, and now God knowes when I shall be in so good a minde againe : and so he with the rest of his companions departed.

When Hodgekins saw, that notwithstanding their theeuery, how they flowted at their lenity, he was much mooued in minde ; and as he stood in his dumps chewing his cud, making his dinner with a dish of melancholy, a gray Fryar reuerently saluted him in this sort : All haile, good-man Hodgekins, happinesse and health be euer with you, and to all suppressors of lewd liuers, God send euerlasting ioyes.

I am sorry good-man Hodgekins, that the great priuiledge which our King gaue to this towne, comes to no greater purpose ; better farre had it beene that it had neuer beene granted, then so lightly regarded ; the towne hath suffered through their owne peeuishnesse, an euerlasting reproch this day, onely because foolish pitty hath hindred Justice.

Consider, that compassion is not to be had vpon theeues and robbers : pity onely appertaineth to the vertuous sort, who are ouerwhelmed with the waues of misery and mischance. What great cause of boldnesse haue you giuen to bad liuers, by letting these fellowes thus to escape, and how shall you now keepe your goods in safety, seeing you fulfill not the Law which should be your defencce ? neuer thinke that theeues will make any conscience to carry away your goods, when

they find them selues in no danger of death, who haue more cause to praise your pity, then commend your wisedome : wherefore in time seeke to preuent the ensuing euill.

For my owne part, I haue that care of your good, that I would worke all good meanes for your benefit, and yet not so much in respect of your profit, as for the desire I haue to vphold Justice, and seeing I find you and the rest so womanish, that you could not find in your hearts to hang a Theefe, I haue deuised how to make a gin, that shall cut off their heads without mans helpe, and if the King will allow thereof.

When Hodgekins heard this, he was somewhat comforted in mind, and said to the Fryer, that if by his cunning he would performe it, he would once againe make sute to the King to haue his grant for the same. The Fryer willed him to haue no doubt in him ; and so when he had deuised it, he got a Carpenter to frame it out of hand.

Hodgekins in the meane time posted it vp to the Court, and told his Maiesty that the priuiledge of Halifax was not worth a pudding. Why so, said the King ? Because, quoth Hodgekins, we can get neuer a hangman to trusse our theeuers : but if it shall like your good Grace, (quoth he) there is a feate Fryar, that will make vs a devise, which shall without the hand of man cut off the cragges of all such earles, if your Maiesty will please to allow thereof.

The King vnderstanding the full effect of the matter,

at length granted his petition : whereupon till this day, it is obserued in Hallifax, that such as are taken stealing of their cloth, haue their heads chopt off with the same gin.

How the Bailiffes of London could get no man to bee a Catchpole, and how certaine Flemings tooke that office vpon them, whereof many of them were fledde into this Realme, by reason of certaine waters that had drowned a great part of their Country. Chap. 9.

THE City of London being at that time gouerned by Bailiffes, it came to passe, that in a certaine fray two of their Catch-poles were killed, for at that time they had not the name of Sergeants : and you shall vnderstand, that their office was then so much hated and detested of Englishmen, that none of them would take it vpon him : so that the Bailiffes were glad to get any man whatsoeuer, and to giue him certain wages to performe that office.

It came to passe, as I said before, that two of their Officers by arresting of a man, were at one instant slaine, by meanes whereof the Bailiffes were enforced to seeke others to put in their roomes ; but by no meaues could they get any, wherefore according to their wonted manner, they made proclamation, that if there were any man that would present himselfe before them, he should not onely be settled in that office during their liues, but also should haue such maintenance and allowance, as for such men was by the City prouided : and notwithstanding

that it was an office most necessary in the Commonwealth, yet did the poorest wretch despise it, that liued in any estimation among his neighbours.

At last, a couple of Flemings, which were fled into this Land, by reason that their Country was drowned with the sea, hearing the Proclamation, offered themselues vnto the Bayliffes, to serue in this place, who were presently receiued and accepted and according to order had garments giuen them, which were of 2. colors, blue and red their coates, breeches and stockings, whereby they were knowne and discerned from other men.

Within halfe a yeere after, it came to passe, that Thomas Doue of Exeter came vp to London, who hauing by his iollity and goodfellowship, brought himselfe greatly behind hand, was in danger to diuers men of the Cite, among the rest, one of his Creditors feed an Officer to arrest him. The Dutch-man that had not beene long experienced in such matters, and hearing how many of his fellowes had beene killed for attempting to arrest men, stood quiuering and quaking in a corner of the street to watch for Thomas Doue, and hauing long waited, at length he espied him : whereupon he prepared his mace ready, and with a pale countenance proceeded to his Office ; at what time comming behind the man, suddenly with his mace he knockt him on the pate, saying, I arrest you, giuing him such a blow, that he fell him to the ground.

The Catchpole thinking he had killed the man, he left his mace behind him and ranne away : the Creditor

he ran after him, calling and crying that he should turne againe: But the Fleming would not by any meanes turne backe, but got him quite out of the City, and tooke Sanctuary at Westminster.

Doue being come to himselfe, arose and went to his Inne, no man hindring his passage, being not a little glad he so escaped the danger. Yet neuerthelesse, at his next comming to London, another Catchpole met with him, and arrested him in the Kings name.

Doue being dismayed at this mischieuous mischance, knew not what to doe: at last hee requested the Catchpole that hee would not violently cast him in prison, but stay till such time as he could send for a friend to be his surety; and although kindnesse in a Catchpole be rare, yet was he won with faire words to doe him this fauour: whereupon Doue desired one to goe to his Oast Iarrat, who immedately came with him, and offered himselfe to be Doues surety.

The Officer, who neuer saw this man before, was much amazed at his sight: for Iarrat was a great and mighty man of body, of countenance grim, and exceeding high of stature, so that the Catchpole was wonderfully afraid, asking if he could find neuer a surety but the deuill, most fearfully intreating him to coniure him away, and he would doe Doue any fauour. What, will you not take my word, qd. Iarrat? sir, qd. the Catchpole, if it were for any matter in hell, I would take your word as soone as any diuels in that place, but seeing it is for a matter on earth, I would gladly haue a surety.

Why, thou whorson cricket, (quoth Iarrat,) thou maggat-apie, thou spinner, thouaultry spider, dost thou take me for a deuill? Sirra, take my word, I charge thee, for this man, or else goodman butter-fly, Ile make thee repent it. The Officer, while he was in the house, said, he was cōtent, but as soon as he came into the street, he cryed, saying : Helpe, helpe, good neighbors, or else the deuill will carry away my prisoner: notwithstanding, there was not one man would stirre to be the Catchpoles aide. Which when he saw, he tooke fast hold on Thomas Doue, and woulde not by any meanes let him goe.

Iarrat seeing this, made no more adoe, but comming to the Officer, gaue him such a fillop on the forehead with his finger, that he fell the poore Fleming to the ground : and while he lay in the street stretching his heeles, Iarrat tooke Doue vnder his arme and carried him home, where he thought himselfe as safe, as King Charlemaine in Mount-albion.

The next morning Iarrat conueyed Doue out of Towne, who afterward kept him in the Country, and came no more in the Catchpoles clawes.

How Duke Robert came a wooing to Margaret with the white hand, and how he appointed to come and steale her away from her Masters. Chap. 10.

THE beautifull Margaret, who had now dwelt with her Dame the space of foure yeeres, was highly regarded and secretly beloued of many gallant and worthy Gen-

tlemen of the Country, but of two most especially, Duke Robert, and Sir William Ferris. It chaneed on a time, that faire Margaret with many others of her Masters folkes, went a hay-making, attired in a red stammell peticoate, and a broad strawne hat vpon her head, she had also a hay-forke, and in her lappe shee did carry her breake-fast. As she went along, Duke Robert, with one or two of his keepers, met with her, whose amiable sight did now anew re-inkindle the secret fire of loue, which long lay smothering in his heart. Wherefore meeting her so happily, he saluted her thus friendly.

Faire maid, good morow, are you walking so diligently to your labour? Needes must the weather be faire, when the Sun shines so cleare, and the hay wholesome that is dryed with such splendent rayes. Renowned and most notable Duke (qd. she) poore haruest folkes pray for faire weather, and it is the laborers comfort to see his worke prosper, and the more happy may we count the day, that is blessed with your prineely presence: but more happy, said the Duke, are they whieh are conuersant in thy company. But let me intreat thee to turne baeke to thy Masters with me, and commit thy forke to some that are fitter for such toyle: trust me, me thinkes thy dame is too much ill advised, in setting thee to such homely busines. I muse thou canst indure this vile beseeming seruitude, whose delicate lims were neuer framed to proue such painefull experiments.

Albeit, quoth she, it becommeth not me to controule your iudicall thoughts, yet were you not the Duke, I

would say, your opinion deceiued you: though your faire eyes seeme cleare, yet I deemed them vnperfect, if they cast before your mind any shadow or sparke of beauty in me: But I rather thinke, because it hath beene an old saying, that women are proud to heare themselues praised, that you either speake this, to drive away the time, or to wring me from my too apparent imperfections. But I humbly intreate pardon, too longe haue I fore-slowed my businesse, and shewne myselfe ouer-bold in your presence; and therewith, with a courtly grace, bending her knees to the courteous Duke, shee went forward to the field, and the Duke to the Towne of Gloucester.

When he came thither, he made his Keeper great cheare, intreating them they would giue him respit to be awhile with old Gray; for we twaine must haue a game or two, quoth he: and for my safe returne, I gage to you my princely word, that as I am a true Knight and a Gentleman, I will returne safe to your charge againe.

The Keepers being content, the Duke departed, and with old Gray goes to the field, to peruse the Worke-folkes, where while Gray found himselfe busie in many matters, he tooke opportunity to talke with Margaret; shee who by his letters before was priuie to his purpose; guest beforehand the cause of his comming: to whom he spake to this effect:

Faire Maid, I did long since manifest my loue to thee by my letter; tell me therefore, were it not better to be a Duches then drudge! a Lady of high reputation,

then a seruant of simple degree? with me thou mightest liue in pleasure, where here thou drawest thy dayes forth in paine; by my loue thou shouldest be made a Lady of great treasures: where now thou art poore and beggerly; all manner of delights should then attend on thee, and whatsoeuer thy heart desireth, thou shouldest haue: wherefore seeing it lyes in thy owne choice, make thy selfe happy, by consenting to my suite.

Sir, (quoth she) I confesse your loue deserues a Ladies fauour, your affection a faithful friend, such a one as could make but one heart and mind of two hearts and bodyes; but farre vnfitt it is that the Turtle should match with the Eagle, though her loue be neuer so pure, her wings are vnfitt to mount so high. While Thales gazed on the starres, he stumbled in a pit. And they that clime vnauidisely, catch a fall suddenly: what auaileth high dignity in time of aduersity? it neither helpeth the sorrow of the heart, nor remoues the bodies misery: as for wealth and treasure, what are they, but fortunes baits to bring men in danger? good for nothing but to make people forget themselues: and whereas you alleadge pouerty to be a hinderer of the hearts comfort, I find it my selfe contrary, knowing more surely to rest vnder a simple habit, then a royll Robe: and verily there is none in the world poore, but they that think themselues poore: for such as are indued with content, are rich, hauing nothing else, but he that is possessed with riches, without content, is most wretched and mise-

rable. Wherfore most Noble Duke, albeit I account my life vnworthy of your least fauour, yet I would desire you to match your loue to your like, and let me rest to my rake, and vse my forke for my lining.

Consider, faire Margaret, (quoth he) that it lyes not in mans power to place his loue where he list, being the worke of an high deity. A bird was neuer seene in Pontus, nor true loue in a fleeting mind: neuer shall remoue the affection of my heart which in nature resembleth the stone Abiston, whose fire can neuer be cooled: wherfore sweet Maiden giue not obstinate deniall, where gentle acceptance ought to be receiued.

Faire sir, (quoth she) consider what high displeasure may rise by a rash match, what danger a Kings frownes may breed, my worthlesse matching with your Royalty, may perhaps regaine your liberty, and hazard my life; then call to mind how little you should enioy your loue, or I my wedded Lord.

The Duke at these words made this reply, that if she consented, she should not dread any danger. The thunder (quoth he) is driuen away by ringing of belles, the Lions wrath qualified by a yeelding body: how much more a Brothers anger with a Brothers intreaty? By me he hath receiued many fauors, and neuer yet did he requite any one of them: and who is ignorant that the Princely Crown which adorneth his head, is my right? all which I am content he shall still enioy, so he requite my kindnesse. But if he should not, then would I be like those men (that eating of the tree Lutes) forget

the Country where they were borne, and neuer more should this clime couer my head, but with thee would I liue in a strange Land, being better content with an egge in thy company, then with all the delicates in England.

The Maiden hearing this, who with many other words was long wooed, at last consented; where yeelding to him her heart with her hand, hee departed, appointing to certifie her from Cardiffe Castle, what determination he would follow: so taking his leaue of Gray he went to his brothers, and with them posted to Cardiffe.

Now it is to be remembred, that sir William Ferrers within a day or two after came vnto Grayes house, as it was his ordinary custome, but not so much ywis for Grayes company, as for the minde he had to Margaret his Maide, who although he were a married man, and had a faire Lady to his wife, yet he laid hard siege to the fort of this Maidens chastity, hauing with many faire words sought to allure her, and by the offer of sundry rich gifts to tempt her. But whē she saw, that by a hundred denials she could not be rid of him, she now chanced on a sudden to giue him such an answer, as droue him from a deceit into such a conceit, as neuer after that time he troubled her.

Sir William Ferrers being very importunate to haue her grant his desire, and when after sundry assaults she gaue him still the repulse, hee would needes know the reason why shee would not loue him, quoth he, If thou didst but consider who he is that seeketh thy fauour,

what pleasure he may doe thee by his purse, and what credit by his countenance, thou wouldest neuer stand on such nice points. If I be thy friend, who dareth be thy foe? and what is he that will once call thy name in question for any thing? therefore sweet girle, be better aduised, and refuse not my offer being so large.

Truly sir William (quoth she) though there be many reasons to make me deny your suite, yet is there one aboue the rest that causes me I cannot loue you. Now, I pray thee, my weneh let me know that, quoth he, and I will amend it whatsoeuer it be. Pardon me sir, said Margaret, if I should speake my mind, it would possibly offend you, and doe me no pleasure because it is a defect in nature, which no phisicke can eure. Sir William hearing on her so, being abashed at her speech, said, Faire Margaret, let me (if I may obtaine no more at thy hands) yet intreat thee to know what this defect should be; I am not wry-neckt, crook-legd, stub-footed, lame-handed, nor bleare-eyed: what can make this mislike? I neuer knew any body that tooke exceptions at my person before.

And the more sorry am I, quoth she, that I was so malapert to speake it, but pardon me my presumption, good sir William, I would I had beene like the Storke tonguelesse, then should I neuer haue caused your disquiet. Nay sweet Margaret, quoth he, tell me deare loue, I commend thy singlenesse of heart, good Margaret speake. Good sir William let it rest, quoth shee, I know you will not beleue it when I haue reuealed it,

neither is it a thing that you can helpe: and yet such is my foolishnesse, had it not beene for that, I thinke verily I had granted your suite ere now. But seeing you vrge me so much to know what it is, I will tell you: it is sir, your ill-fauoured great nose, that hangs sagging so lothsomely to your lips, that I cannot finde in my heart so much as to kisse you.

What, my nose, quoth he? is my nose so great and I neuer knew it? certainly I thought my nose to be as comely as any mans: but this it is we are all apt to think well of our selues, and a great deale better then we ought: but let me see? my nose! by the masse tis true, I doe now feele it my selfe: Good Lord, how was I blinded before? Hereupon it is certaine, that the Knight was driuen into such a conceit, as none could perswade him but his nose was so great indeed; his Lady, or any other that spake to the contrarie, he would say they were flatterers, and that they lied, insomuch that he would be ready to strike some of them that commended and spake well of his nose. If they were men of worship, or any other that contraried him in his opinion, he would sweare they flowted him, and be ready to challenge them the field. He became so ashamed of himselfe, that after that day he would neuer goe abroad, whereby Margaret was well rid of his company.

On a time, a wise and graue Gentleman seeing him grounded in his conceit so strongly, gaue his Lady counsell, not to contrary him therein, but rather say that she would seeke out some cunning Physician to cure

him: for, said he, as sir William hath taken this conceit of himselfe, so is he like neuer to heare other opinion, till his owne conceit doth remoue it, the which must be wisely wrought to bring it to passe.

Whereupon the Lady hauing conferred with a Physician that beare a great name in the countrey, hee vnderooke to remoue this fond conceit by his skill. The day being appointed when the Phisician should come, and the Knight beeing told thereof, for very ioy he would goe forth to meete him, when a woman of the Towne saw the Knight, hauing heard what rumor went because of his nose, shee looked very stedfastly vpon him: the Knight casting his eye vpon her, seeing her to gaze so wistly in his face, with an angry countenance said thus to her, Why, how now good huswife, cannot you get you about your business? The woman being a shrewish queane, answered him cuttedly, No mary can I not, qd. she. No, you drab, What is the cause, said the Knight? Because, quoth she, your nose stands in my way: wherewith the Knight being very angry, and abashed, went backe againe to his house.

The Physician being come, he had filled a certaine bladder with sheepes blood, and conueyed it into his sleeue, where at the issue of the bladder he had put in a piece of a swans quill, through the which the blood should runne out of the bladder so close by his hand, that hee holding the Knight by the nose, it might not be perceiued, but that it issued thence. All things being prepared, he told the Knight, that by a foule corrupt

blood wherewith the veines of his nose were ouercharged, his impediment did grow, therefore, quoth he, to haue redresse for this disease, you must haue a veine opened in your nose, whence this foule corruption must be taken: whereupon it will follow, that your nose will fall againe to his naturall proportion, and neuer shall you be troubled with this griefe any more, and thereupon will I gage my life.

I pray you master Doctor, said the Knight, is my nose so big as you make it? With reurence I may speake it, said the Physician, to tell the truth, and auoid flattery, I neuer saw a more misshapen nose so foule to sight. Lo you now Madam, quoth the Knight, this is you that said my nose was as well, as hansome, and as comely a nose as any mans.

Alas sir, qd. she, I speake it (God wot) because you should not grieue at it, nor take my words in ill part, neither did it indeed become me to mislike of your nose.

All this we will quickly remedy, said the Physician, haue no doubt: and with that, he very orderly priekt him in the nose, but not in a veine whereby he might bleed: and presently hauing a tricke finely to vnstop the quill, the blood ranne into a bason in great abundance: and when the bladder was empty, and the bason almost full, the Physician seemed to close the veine, and asked him how he felt his nose, shewing the great quantite of filthy blood which from thence he had taken.

The Knight beholding it with great wonder, said, he thought that no man in the world had beene troubled

with such abundance of corrupt blood in his whole body, as lay in his mis-shapen nose, and therewithall he began to touch and handle his nose, saying, that he felt it mightily asswaged. Immediately a glasse was brought wherein he might behold himselfe. Yea mary, qd. he now I praise God, I see my nose is come into some reasonable proportion, and I feele my selfe very well eased of the burthen thereof; but if it continue thus, thats all. I will warrant your worship, said the Physician, for euer being troubled with the like againe. Whereupon the Knight receiuied great ioy, and the Doctor a high reward.

How Thomas of Reading was murdered at his Oasts house of Colebrooke, who also had murdred many before him, and how their wickednesse was at length reuealed. Chap. 11.

THOMAS of Reading hauing many occasions to come to London, as well about his own affaires, as also the Kings businesse, being in a great office vnder his Majestie, it chanced on a time, that his Oast and Oastesse of Colebrooke, who through couetousnesse had murdered many of the guests, and hauing every time he came thither great store of his money to lay vp, appointed him to be the next fat pig that should be killed: For it is to be vnderstood, that when they plotted the murder of any man, this was alwaies their terme, the man to his wife, and the woman to her hus-

band : wife, there is now a fat pig to be had if you want one. Whereupon she would answer thus, I pray you put him in the hogstie till to morrow. This was, when any man came thither alone without others in his company, and they saw he had great store of money.

This man should be then laid in the chamber right ouer the kitchin, which was a faire chamber, and the better set out then any other in the house : the best bedstead therein, though it were little and low, yet was it most cunningly carned, and faire to the eye, the feet whereof were fast naild to the chamber floore, in such sort, that it could not in any wise fall, the bed that lay therein was fast sowed to the sides of the bedstead : Moreouer, that part of the chamber whereupon this bed and bedstead stood, was made in such sort, that by the pulling out of two yron pinnes below in the kitchin, it was to be let downe and taken vp by a draw-bridge, or in manner of a trap-doore : moreouer in the kitchin, directly vnder the place where this should fall : was a mighty great caldron, wherein they vsed to seethe their liquor when they went to brewing. Now, the men appointed for the slaughter, were laid into this bed, and in the dead time of the night when they were sound asleepe, by plucking out the foresaid yron pinnes, downe will the man fall out of his bed into the boyling caldron, and all the cloaths that were vpon him : where being suddenly scalded and drowned, he was neuer able to cry or speake one word.

Then had they a little ladder euer standing ready in

the kitchin, by the which they presently mounted into the said chamber, and there closely take away the mans apparell, as also his money, in his male or cap-case : and then lifting vp the said falling floore which hung by hinges, they made it fast as before.

The dead body would they take presently out of the caldron and throw it downe the riuier, which ran neere vnto their house, whereby they escaped all danger.

Now if in the morning any of the rest of the guests that had talkt with the murdered man ore eue, chanst to aske for him, as hauing occasion to ride the same way that he should haue done, the good-man would answere, that he tooke horse a good while before day, and that he himselfe did set him forward : the horse the good-man would also take out of the stable, and conuay him by a hay-barne of his, that stood from his house a mile or two, whereof himselfe did alwaies keepe the keies full charily, and when any hay was to be brought from thence, with his owne hands he would deliuer it : then before the horse should goe from thence, he would dismarke him : as if he ware a long taile, he would make him curtall : or else crop his eares, or cut his mane, or put out one of his eies ; and by this meanes hee kept himselfe vnknowne.

Now Thomas of Reading, as I said before, being markt and kept for a fat pig, he was laid in the saime chamber of death, but by reason Gray of Gloucester chanced also to come that night, he escaped scalding.

The next time he came, he was laid there againe,

but before he fell asleepe, or was warme in his bed, one came riding thorow the Towne and cryed piteously, that London was all on a fire, and that it had burned downe Thomas Becketts house in West-cheape, and a great number more in the same street, and yet (quoth he) the fire is not quencht.

Which tidings when Thomas of Reading heard, he was very sorrowfull, for of the same Becket that day he had receiued a great peece of money, and had left in his house many of his writings, and some that appertained to the King also : therefore there was no nay but he would ride backe againe to London presently, to see how the matter stood ; thereupon making himselfe ready, departed. This crosse fortune caused his Oast to frowne, neuertheless the next time (qd. he) will pay for all.

Notwithstanding God so wrought, that they were preuented the likewise, by reason of a great fray that hapned in the house betwixt a couple that fell out at dice, insomuch as the murderers themselues were inforced to call him vp being a man in great authority, that he might set the house in quietnesse, out of the which by meanes of this quarrell, they doubted to lose many things.

Another time when hee should haue beene laid in the same place, he fell so sicke, that he requested to haue some body to watch with him, whereby also they could not bring their vile purpose to passe. But hard it is to escape the ill fortunes whereunto a man is allotted :

for albeit that the next time that he came to London, his horse stumbled and broke one of his legs as he should ride homeward, yet hired he another to hasten his owne death ; for there is no remedy but he should goe to Colebrooke that night : but by the way he was heauy asleepe, that he could scant keepe himselfe in the saddle ; and when he came neere vnto the Towne, his nose burst out suddenly a bleeding.

Well, to his Inne he came, and so heauy was his heart that he could eate no meat : his Oast and Oastesse hearing he was so melancholy, came vp to cheare him, saying, Jesus Master Cole, what ayles you to night ? neuer did we see you thus sad before : will it please you to haue a quart of burnt sacke ? With a good will (quoth he) and would to God Tom Doue were here, he would surely make me merry, and we should lacke no musicke : but I am sorry for the man with all my heart, that he is come so farre behind hand : but alas, so much can euery man say, but what good doth it him ? No, no, it is not words can helpe a man in this case, the man had need of other relieve then so. Let me see : I haue but one child in the world, and that is my daughter, and halfe that I haue is hers, the other halfe my wifes. What then ? shall I be good to no body but them ? In conscience, my wealth is too much for a couple to possesse, and what is our Religion without charity ? And to whom is charity more to be shewne, then to decaid house-holders ?

Good my Oast lend me a pen and inke, and some

paper, for I will write a letter vnto the poore man straight; and something I will giue him: That almes which a man bestowes with his owne hands, he shall be sure to haue deliuered, and God knowes how long I shall liue.

With that, his Oastesse dissemblingly answered, saying, Doubt not, Master Cole, you are like enough by the course of nature to liue many yeeres. God knowes (quoth he) I neuer found my heart so heauy before. By this time pen, inke, and paper was brought, setting himselfe in writing as followeth.

In the name of God, Amen. I bequeath my soule to God, and my body to the ground, my goods equally betweene my wife Elenor, and Isabel my daughter. Item I giue to Thomas Doue of Exeter one hundred pounds, nay that is too little, I giue to Thomas Doue two hundred pounds in money, to be paid vnto him presently vpon his demand thereof by my said wife and daughter.

Ha, how say you Oast (qd. he) is not this well? I pray you reade it. His Oast looking thereon, said, why Master Cole, what haue you written here? you said you would write a letter, but me thinks you haue made a Will, what neede haue you to doe thus? thanks be to God, you may liue many faire yeeres. Tis true (quoth Cole) if it please God, and I trust this writing cannot shorten my daies, but let me see, haue I made a Will? Now, I promise you, I did verily purpose to write a

letter: notwithstanding, I have written that that God put iuto my mind: but looke once againe my Oast, is it not written there, that Doue shall haue two hundred pounds, to be paid when he comes to demand it? yes indeed said his Oaste. Well then, all is well, said Cole, and it shall goe as it is for me. I will not bestow the new writing thereof any more.

Then folding it vp, he sealed it, desiring that his Oast would send it to Exeter: he promised that he would, notwithstanding Cole was not satisfied: but after some pause, he woudls needs hire one to carry it. And so sitting downe sadly in his chaire againe, vpon a sudden he burst forth a weeping; they demanding the cause thereof, he spake as followeth:

No cause of these feares I know: but it comes now into my minde (said Cole) when I set toward this my last iourney to London, how my daughter tooke on, what a coyle she kept to haue me stay, and I could not be rid of the little baggage a long time, she did so hang about me, when her mother by violence tooke her away, she cryed out most mainly, O my father, my father, I shall neuer see him againe.

Alas, pretty soule, said his Oastesse, this was but meere kindnesse in the girle, and it seemeth she is very fond of you. But alas, why should **you** grieue at this? you must consider that it was but childishnesse. I, it is indeed, said Cole, and with that he began to nod. Then they asked him if he would goe to bed. No, said he, although I am heauy, I haue no mind to goe to bed

at all. With that certaine musicians of the towne came to the chamber, and knowing Master Cole was there, drue out their instruments, and very solemnly began to play.

This musicke comes very well (said Cole) and when he had listned a while thereunto, he said, Me thinks these instrumēts sound like the ring of St. Mary Oueries bells, but the Base drowns all the rest : and in my eare it goes like a bell that rings a forenoones knell, for Gods sake let them leau off, and beare them this simple reward. The Musicians being gone, his Oast asked if now it would please him to goe to bed ; for (quoth he) it is welneere eleuen of the clocke.

With that Cole beholding his Oast and Oastesse earnestly, began to start backe, saying, what aile you to looke so like pale death? good Lord, what haue you done, that your hands are thus bloody ? What my hands, said his Oast ? Why, you may see they are neither bloody nor foule : either your eyes doe greatly dazell, or else fancies of a troubled minde doe delude you.

Alas, my Oast, you may see, said hee, how weake my wits are, I neuer had my head so idle before. Come, let me drinke once more, and then I will to bed, and trouble you no longer. With that hee made himselfe vnready, and his Oastesse was very diligent to warme a kerchiffe, and put it about his head. Good Lord, said he, I am not sicke, I praise God, but such an alteration I finde in my selfe as I neuer did before.

With that the scritch-owlc cried pitiously, and anon

after the night-rauen sate croaking hard by his window. Iesu haue mercy vpon me, quoth hee, what an ill-fauoured cry doe yonder carrion birds make, and therewithall he laid him downe in his bed, from whence he neuer rose againe.

His Oast and Oastesse, that all this while noted his troubled mind, began to commune betwixt themselues thereof. And the man said, he knew not what were best to be done. By my consent (quoth he) the matter should passe, for I thinke it is not best to meddle on him. What man (quoth she) faint you now? haue you done so many and do you shrinke at this? Then shewing him a great deale of gold which Cole had left with her, she said, Would it not grieue a bodies heart to lose this? hang the old churle, what should he doe liuing any longer? he hath too much, and we haue too little: tut husband, let the thing be done, and then this is our owne.

Her wicked counsell was followed, and when they had listned at his chamber doore, they heard the man sound asleepe: All is safe, quoth they, and downe into the kitchin they goe, their seruants being all in bed, and pulling out the yron pins, downe fell the bed, and the man dropt out into the boyling caldron. He being dead, they betwixt them cast his body into the riuier, his clothes they made away, and made all things as it should be: but when hee came to the stable to conuey thence Coles horse, the stable doore being open, the horse had got loose, and with a part of the halter about

his necke, and straw trussed vnder his belly, as the Ostlers had dressed him ore eue, he was gone out at the back-side, which led into a great field ioyning to the house, and so leaping diuers hedges, being a lustie stout horse, had got into a ground where a mare was grasing, with whom he kept such a coile, that they got into the high-way, where one of the Towne meeting them, knew the mare, and brought her and the horse to the man that owd her.

In the meane space, the Musicians had beene at the Inne, and in requitall of their eueninges gift, they intended to giue Cole some musicke in the morning. The good-man told them he tooke horse before day : likewise there was a guest in the house that would haue bore him company to Reading, vnto whom the Oast also answered, that he himselfe set him vpon horsebacke, and that he went long agoe. Anon came the man that owed the mare, inquiring vp and downe, to know and if none of them missed a horse, who said no. At the last hee came to the signe of the Crane where Cole lay : and calling the Oastlers, he demanded of them if they lackt none, they said no: Why then said the man, I perceiue my mare is good for something, for if I send her to field single, she will come home double : thus it passed on all that day and the night following. But the next day after, Coles wife musing that her husband came not home, sent one of her men on horsebacke, to see if he could meete him : and if (quoth she) you meet him not betwixt this and Colebrooke, aske for him at the Crane, but if you find him not there, then

ride to London; for I doubt he is either sicke or else some mischance hath fallen vnto him.

The fellow did so, and asking for him at Colebrooke, they answered, hee went homeward from thence such a day. The seruant musing what should be become of his Master, and making much inquiry in the Towne for him: at length one told him of a horse that was found on the high-way, and no man knew whence he came. He going to see the horse, knew him presently, and to the Crane he goes with him. The Oast of the house perciuing this, was blanke, and that night fled secretly away. The fellow going vnto the Justice desired his helpe: presently after word was brought that Jarman of the Crane was gone, then all the men said, he had sure made Cole away: and the Musicians told what Jarman said to them, when they would haue giuen Cole musicke. Then the woman being apprehended and examined, confessed the truth. Jarman soone after was taken in Windsor Forest, he and his wife were both hangd, after they had laid open al these things before expressed. Also he confessed, that he being a Carpenter made that false falling floore, and how his wife deuised it. And how they had murdered by that means lx. persons. And yet notwithstanding all the money which they had gotten thereby, they prospered not, but at their death were found very farre in debt.

When the King heard of this murder, he was for the space of vii dayes so sorrowfull and heanie, as he would not heare any suite, giuing also commandement, that

the house should quite be consumed with fire, wherein Cole was murdered, and that no man should euer build vpon that cursed ground.

Coles substance at his death was exceeding great, hee had daily in his house an hundred men seruants and xl. maides ; hee maintained beside aboue two or three hundred people, spinners and carders, and a great many other house-holders. His wife neuer after married, and at her death shee bestowed a mightie summe of money toward the maintaining of the new builded Monastery. Her daughter was most richly married to a Gentleman of great worship, by whom she had many children. And some say, that the riuer whereinto Cole was cast, did euer since carrie the name of Cole being called The riuer of Cole, and the Towne of Colebrooke.

How diuers of the Clothiers wiues went to the Churching of Suttons wife of Salisbury, and of their meriment. Ch. 12.

SUTTONS wife of Salisbury which had lately bin deliuered of a sonne, against her going to Church, prepared great cheare : at what time Simons wife of Southampton came thither, and so did diuers others of the Clothiers wiues, onely to make merry at this Churching feast: and whilst these Danies sate at the Table, Crab, Weasell, and Wren, waited on the boord, and as the old Proverbe speaketh, Many women many words, so fell it out at that time: for there was such prattling that it passed : some talkt of their husbands frowardnes, some shewed

their maids sluttishnes, othersome deciphered the costlines of their garments, some told many tales of their neighbours: and to be briefe, there was none of them but would haue talke for a whole day.

But when Crab, Weasell, and Wren saw this, they concluded betwixt theinselues, that as oft as any of the women had a good bit of meate on their trenchers, they offering a cleane one, should catch that commodity, and so they did: but the women being busie in talke, marked it not, till at the last one found leisure to misse her meat: whereupon she said, that their boldness exceeded their diligence. Not so, forsooth, said Weasell, there is an hundred bolder then we. Name me one, said the woman if you can. A flea is bolder, quoth Crabbe. How will you proue that, said the woman? Because, quoth he, they will creepe vnder your coates, where we dare not come, and now and then bite you by the buttocks as if they were brawne. But what becomes of them, qd. the woman? their sweet meat hath sowre sauce, and their lustines doth often cost them their liues, therefore take heed. A good warning of a faire woman, said Wren, but I had not thought so fine a wit in a fat belly.

The women seeing their men so merry, said it was a signe there was good ale in the house. Thats as fit for a Churching quoth Weasell, as a cudgell for a curst queane. Thus with pleasant communication and merry quips they droue out the time, till the fruit and spice-cakes were set on the boord: At what time one of them

began to aske the other, if they heard not of the cruell murder of Thomas of Reading? What, said the rest, is old Cole murdered? when, I pray you was the deed done? The other answered, on Friday last, O good Lord, said the women, how was it done, can you tell?

As report goes, said the other, he was rosted alive. O pitifull! was hee roasted? Indeed I heard one say, a man was murdred at London, and that he was sodden at an Inholders house, and serued it to the guests instead of porke.

No neighbour, it was not at London, said another; I heare say twas coming from London, at a place called Colebrook, and it is reported for truth, that the Inholder made pies of him, and penny pasties, yea, and made his owne seruant eate a piece of him. But I pray you good neighbour, can you tell how it was knowne: some say, that a horse reuealed it.

Now by the masse (quoth Grayes wife) it was told one of my neighbours, that a certaine horse did speake, and told great things. That sounds like a lie, said one of them. Why, said another, may not a horse speake, as well as Balaam asse? It may be, but it is vnlikely, said the third. But where was the horse when he spake? As some say, qd. she, he was in the field, and had broke out of the stable, where he stood fast locked in mighty strong yron fetters, which hee burst in peeces as they had beene straws, and broke downe the stable doore, and so got away. The good-man comming in at these speeches, asked what that was they talkt of.

Marry, said his wife wee heare that Cole of Reading is murdred: I pray you is it true? I, said Sutton, it is true, that vile villaine his Oast murdered him, in whose house the man had spent many a pound. But did they make pies of him, said his wife; No, no, quoth her husband: he was scalded to death in a boyling caldron, and afterward throwne into a running riuver that is hard by. But good husband, how was it knowne? By his horse, quoth hee. What, did hee tell his master was murdered? could the horse speake English? Jesus what a foolish woman are you, quoth he, to aske such a question? But to end this, you are all heartily welcome, good neighbours, and I am sorry you had no better cheere. So with thanks the women departed. Thus haue yee heard the diuers tales that will be spred abroad of an euil deed.

How Duke Robert deceiued his keepers, and got from them: how he met faire Margaret, and in carrying her away, was taken for the which he had his eyes put out. Chap. 13.

DUKE Robert, hauing, as you heard, obtained the loue of faire Margaret, did now cast in his mind, how hee might delude his Keepers, and carry her quite away. In the end he being absolutely resolued what to doe, sent this letter vnto her, wherein he requested, that she would be readie to meet him in the Forrest, betwixt Cardiffe and Gloucester.

The young Lady hauing secretly receiued his mes-

sage, yⁿknownne to her master or dame, in a morning betime made her ready and got forth, walking to the appointed place, where her Loue should meet her.

During her aboade there, and thinking long ere her Loue came, she entred into diuers passions, which indeed presaged some disaster fortune to follow. O my deare Loue, said shee, how slacke art thou in performing thy promise! why doe not thy deeds agree with thy indicting? see these are thy words, Come, my deare Margaret, and with Cupids swift wings flie to thy friend, he now as nimble in thy footing, as the Camels of Bactria, that runne an hundred miles a day, I will waite and stay for thee, so I stay not too long. There is no Country like Austria for ambling horses, and to carry thee I haue got one.

O my Loue (quoth she) here am I, but where art thou? O why doest thou play the trewant with time, who like the wind slides away vnseene? An ambling gennet of Spaine is too slow to serue our turnes. A flying horse, for flying Louers were most meete. And thus casting many lookes thorow the Siluane shades, vp and downe to espie him, she thought euery minute an houre, till she might see him, sometimes she would wish her self a bird, that she might flie through the ayre to meet him, or a pretty squirill to clime the highest tree to descry his coming: but finding her wishes vaine, she began thus to excuse him and perswaded her selfe, saying :

How much to blame am I, to finde fault with my

friend? Alas, men that lacke their liberty, must come when they can, not when they would, poore prisoners cannot doe what they desire, and then why should I be so hastie? Therefore if safely I may lay me down I will beguile vnquiet thoughts with quiet sleepe: it is said that Galino breeds no Serpents, nor doth Englands forrests nourish Beares or Lyons, therefore without hurt I hope I may rest awile. Thus leauing faire Margaret in a sweet slumber, we will returne to Duke Robert, who had thus plotted his escape from his keepers.

Hauing liberty of the King to hawke and hunt, hee determined on a day, as he should follow the chase, to leauethe hounds to the Hart, and the hunters to their hornes, and being busie in their sport, himselfe would flie, which hee performed at that time when hee appointed Margaret to meeete him, and so comming to the place, his horse all on a water, and himself in a sweat, finding his Loue asleepe, he awaked her with a kisse, saying, Arise faire Margaret, now comes the time wherein thou shalt be made a Queene; and presently setting her on horsebacke, he posted away.

Now, when the Keepers saw they had lost his company, and that at the killing of the game, hee was not present, they were among themselues in such a mutiny, that they were ready one to stabbe another. It was thy fault, said one, that hee thus escapt from vs, that hadst more mind of thy pleasure, then of thy prisoner, and by this meanes we are all yndone. The other said as much

to him, that he had thought he had followed him in the chase: but leauing at last this contention, the one posted vp to the King, while the others coasted vp and downe the Country to seareh for the Duke, who hauing kild his horse in trauelling, was most vnhappily mette on foot with faire Margaret, ere he could come to any towne, where he might for money haue another. But when he espyed his Keepers come to take him, he desired Margaret to make shift for herselfe, and to seeke to escape them. But she being of a contrary mind, said, she would liue and die with him.

The Duke seeing himselfe ready to be surprized, drew out his sword, and said, he would buy his liberty with his life, before he would yeeld to be any more a prisoner; and thereupon began a great fight betwixt them, insomuch that the Duke had killed two of them: but himselfe being sore wounded, and faint with ouermuch bleeding, at length fell downe, being not able any longer to stand: and by this meanes the good Duke was taken with his faire loue, and both of them committed to prison.

But in the meane space, when Grayes wife had missed her maide, and saw she was quite gone, she made great lamentation for her among her neighbours, for she loued her as dearly as any child that euer she bore of her owne body. O Margaret, (quoth she) what cause hadst thou thus to leaue me? if thou didst mislike of any thing, why didst thou not tell me? If thy wages

were too little, I would haue mended it: If thy apparell had been too simple, thou shouldest haue had better: If thy worke had bin too great, I would haue had helpe for thee.

Farewell my sweet Meg, the best seruant that euer came in any mans house, many may I haue of thy name, but neuer any of thy nature, thy diligence is much, in thy hands I laid the whole gouernment of my house, and thereby eased myselfe of that care, which now will cumber me.

Heere shee hath left me my keyes vnto my chests, but my comfort is gone with her presence, euery gentle word that she was wont to speake, comes now into my mind, her courteous behauour shall I neuer forget: with how sweet and modest a countenance would she qualifie my ouer-hastie nature? It repents my heart that euer I spoke foule word vnto her. O Meg, wert thou here againe, I would neuer chide thee more: but I was an vnworthy Dame for such a seruant: what will become of me now, if I should chance to be sick, seeing she is gone, that was wont to be both my Apoticky and Physician?

Well, quoth her neighbours, there is no remedy now, but to rest content, you shall one day heare of her, doubt you not, and thinke this, that she was not so good, but you may get another as good, and therefore doe not take it so heauily. O neighbour, blame me not to grieue, seeing I haue lost so great a iewell, and sure I am per-

swaded, that scant in a bodies life time, they shall meet with the like.

I protest, I would circuit England round about on my bare feet to meet with her againe. O, my Meg was surely stole away from me, else would she not haue gone in such sort. Her husband on the other side grieued as much, and rested not night nor day riding vp and downe to seeke her: but shee poore soule, is fast lockt vp in prison, and therfore cannot be met withall.

But when the King vnderstood of his brothers escape, hee was maruelous wroth, giuing great charge and commandement when he was taken, that both his eyes should be put out and be kept in prison till his dying day; appointing also that the Maid should lose her life for presumption of louing him.

This matter being rumoured ouer all England, it came to the eares of Gray and his wife, who hearing that Margaret also was there in prison appointed to die, the good aged woman neuer rested till she came to the Court, where kneeling before the King with many teares she besought his Maiestie to spare the Maidens life, saying, Most royll King consider, I humbly beseech you, that the Duke your brother was able to entice any woman to his loue: much more a silly Maiden, especially promising her marriage, to make her a Lady, a Dutchesse, or a Queene, who would refuse such an offer, when at the instant they might get both a princely husband and a high dignity: if death be a Louers guerdon,

then what is due to hatred? I am in my heart per-swaded, that had my poore Margaret thought it would haue bred your Highnes displeasure, she would neuer haue bought his loue so deare. Had your Grace made it known to your Commons, that it was vnlawful for any to marry the Duke your brother, who would haue attempted such an action: if she had wilfully disobeyed your Graces commandement, she might haue been thought worthy of death; but seeing ignorantly she offended, I beseech your Grace to recall the sentence, and let me still enjoy my seruant, for neuer will I rise, till your Maiestie haue granted my petition.

His Highnes, who was of nature mercifull, beholding the womans abundant teares, tooke pitie on her, and granted her suite: which being obtained, shee went home in all haste possible. And from thence, shee with her husband taking their iourney to Cardiffe castle, they came at that very instant when the Maiden was led toward her death, who went in most ioyfull sort to the same, saying, that they were not worthy to be accounted true louers, that were not willing to die for loue: and so with a smiling countenance she passed on, as if she had eaten Apium Risus, which causeth a man to die laughing: but her Dame Gray seeing her, fell about her necke, and with many kisses imbraced her, saying, Thou shalt not die my wench, but goe home with me; and for thy deliuery, behold here the Kings letters; and with that she deliuered them vp to the governour of the Castle: who reading them found these words written:

Wee pardon the maids life, and grant her liberty, but let her not passe, till she see her louers eyes put out, which we will haue you doe in such sort that not onely the sight may perish, but the eye continue faire, for which cause I haue sent downe Doctor Piero, that he may execute the same.

The Gouernour of the Castle hauing read the Kings letter, said thus to the Maiden: The Kings Maiesty hath pardoned thy life, and allowed thy liberty: but you must not passe before you see your Louers eyes put out. O sir, said the Maiden, mistake not your selfe, they are my eyes that must be put out, and not the Dukes: as his offence grew by my meanes, so I being guilty, ought to receiue the punishment.

The Kings cominandement must be fulfilled, said the Gouernour: and therewithall Duke Robert was brought forth, who hearing that he must lose his eyes, said thus: The Noble mind is neuer conquered by grieve, nor ouercome by mischance: but as the Hart reneweth his age by eating the Serpent, so doth a man lengthen his life with deuouring sorrow: my eyes haue offended the King, and they must be punished, my heart is in as great fault, why is not that killed?

The Kings Maiesty, said the Gouernour, spares your life of meere loue, and onely is content to satisfie the Law with the losse of your eyes, wherefore take in good part this punishment, and thinke you haue deserved greater then is granted.

With this Margaret cryed out, saying, O my deare

Loue, most gentle Prince, well may you wish that I had neuer bin borne, who by seeing of mee must lose your sight; but happie should I count my selfe, if it so please the King, that I might redeeme thy eyes with my life: or else, that being an equall offender, I might receiue equall punishment: hadst thou sustained this smart for some Queene or Princesse of high blood, it might with the more ease be borne, but to endure it for such a one as I, it must needs cause a treble grieve to be increased.

Content thee faire Margaret said the Duke: for honour ought to be giuen to vertue, and not riches: for Glory, Honor, Nobility and riches without vertue, are but clokes of maliciousnes. And now let me take my leauc of thy beauty, for neuer must I behold thy face: notwithstanding I account my eyes well lost, in that I doe forgoe them for so peereles a paragon. Now faire heauens farewell, the Sunne, Moone, and Starres shall I in this world neuer behold againe, and farewell also the fruitfull earth: well may I feele thee, but those poore windowes of my body are now denied to view thee any more: and though the world hath euer bin my foe, yet will I bid thee farewell too, and farewell all my friends, whiles I live here in this world, I must suppose to sleepe, and wake when I come in heauen, where I hope to see you all againe. Yet had it pleased the King, I had rather haue lost my life then my eyes. Life, why, what is it but a flowre, a bubble in the water, a spanne long, and full of miserie: of such small account is life, that

euery Soldier will sell it for six pence. And trust me,
I doe now detest life, worse then a goat doth hate
Basill.

With that the Doctor prepared his instrument, and being ready to set to the Dukes eyes, he said, O stay Master Doctor, till I haue conueyed my Loues countenance downe into my heart: Come hither my sweet, and let me giue thee my last kisse, while mine eyes may direct me to thy cherry lips. Then imbracing her in his armes, he said, O that I might giue thee a kisse of xx yeeres long, and to satisfie my greedy eyes with thy sight: yet it doth somewhat content me, because thou art present at my punishment, that I may hold thee by the hand, to comfort my heart, at the sudden pricke of my eye.

This being said, the Doctor performed his duty, and so put out the christall sight: at what time D. Robert started vp and with a most manly courage said, I must thanke his Maiestie, that though hee depriueth me of my sight, yet he leaueth me eyes to weepe for my sinnes. But so soone as Margaret beheld the deed, she fell downe in a swoune; and much a doe her dame had to recouer her life: which when the Duke vnderstood, hee was wondrous woe, groping for her with his bleeding eyes, saying O where is my Loue? for Gods sake haue regard to her. And I pray you most heartily, good good-wife Gray, let her haue this fauour for my sake, that she may be vsed kindly. And with that the Keepers led him into the Castle, and Margaret was carried away

wondrous sicke and ill : but her dame was most tender ouer her ; and woulde suffer her to lacke nothing. When she was somewhat well reconered, her Dame Gray set her on horsebacke : and at her comming to Gloucester, there was no small ioy.

How Thomas Doue being fallen to decay, was forsaken
of his friends, and despised of his seruants : and how
in the end he was raised againe through the liberality
of the Clothiers. Chap. 14.

SUCH as seeke the pleasure of the world, follow a shadow wherein is no substance : and as the adder Aspis tickleth a man to death, so doth vaine pleasure flatter vs, till it makes vs forget God, and consume our substance, as by Tom Doue it is apparent, who had through a free heart, and a liberall minde wasted his wealth ; and looke how his goods consumed, so his friends fled from him : And albeit he had beene of great ability, and thereby done good vnto many, yet no man regarded him in his pouerty, but casting a scornefull countenance vpon him, they passed by him with slender salutation : neither would any of his former acquaintance do him good, or pleasure him the value of a farthing ; his former friendship done to them was quite forgot, and he made of as much account, as Job when he sate on the dunghill.

Now, when his wicked seruants saw him in this disgrace with the world, they on the other side began to disdaine him. Notwithstanding that hee (to his great

cost) had long time brought them vp, yet did they nothing regard it, but behind his backe in most scornewfull sort derided him, and both in their words and actions greatly abuse him, reuerence they would doe none vnto him, but when they spake, it was in such malapert sort, as would grieue an honest minde to heare it.

At last it came to passe, that breaking out into meere contempt, they said they would stay no longer with him, and that it was a great discredit for them, to serue a person so beggerly : whereupon they thought it conuenient to seeke for their benefits elsewhere. When the distressed man found the matter so plaine being in great grieve, he spake thus vnto them Now do I find, to my sorrow, the small trust that is in this false world. Why, my Masters (quoth he) haue you so much forgotten my former prosperity, that you nothing regard my present necessity? in your wants I forsooke you not, in your sicknesse I left you not, nor despised you in your great pouerty: it is not vnknowne, though you doe not consider it, that I tooke some of you vp in the high-way, othersome from your needy parents, and brought the rest from meere beggery to a house of bounty; where from paltrie boyes, I brought you vp to mans state, and haue, to my great cost, taught you a trade, whereby you may liue like men. And in requitall cf all my courtesie, cost and good will, will you now on a sudden forsake me? is this the best recompence that you can find your hearts to yeeld mee?

This is farre from the minds of honest seruants. The fierce Lion is kind to those that doe him good: plucke but one thorne out of his foot, and for the same he will shew manifold fauors. The wilde Bull will not ouerthrow his dam: and the very Dragons are dutifull to their nourishers. Bee better aduised and call to mind, I beseech you, that I haue not pluckt a thorne out of your feet, but drawne your whole bodies out of perils, and when you had no meanes to helpe your selues, I onely was your support, and he, that when all other forsooke you, did comfort you in all your extremities.

And what of all this, quoth one of them? because you tooke vs vp poore, doth it therefore follow, that we must be your slaues? We are young-men, and for our part, we are no further to regard your profit, then it may stand with our preferment: Why should we lose our benefit to pleasure you? if you taught vs our trade, and brought vs vp from boies to men, you had our seruice for it, whereby you made no small benefit, if you had as well vsed it, as we got it. But if you be poore, you may thanke your selfe, being a iust scourge for your prodigalitie, and is my opinion plaine, that to stay with you, is the next way to make vs like you, neither able to helpe our selues, nor our friends: therefore in briefe; come pay me my wages, for I will not stay, let the rest doe as they will, for I am resolued.

Well said his Master, if needs thou wilt be gone, here is part of thy wages in hand, and the rest as soone

as God sends it, thou shalt haue it: and with that, turning to the rest, he said, Let me yet intreat you to stay, and leaue me not altogether destitute of helpe : by your labours must I liue, and without you I know not what to doe. Consider therefore my need, and regard my great charge. And if for my sake you will doe nothing, take compassion of my poore children ; stay my sliding foot, and let me not vtterly fall, through your flying from me.

Tush (quoth they) what do you talke to vs? we can haue better wages, and serne a man of credit, where our fare shall be farre better, and our gaines greater : therefore the world might count vs right coxcomes, if we should forsake our profit, to pleasure you : therefore adieu, God send you more money, for you are like to haue no more men : and thus they departed.

When they were gone, within a while after they met one with another, saying, What cheare? are you all come away: in faith I, what should we doe else, quoth they : but hear'st thou sirra, hast thou got thy wages ? Not yet saith the other, but I shall haue it, and that is as good, tis but x shillings. Saist thou so (said he) now I see thou art one of God Almighties idiots : Why so, said the other? Because (quoth he) thou wilt be fed with shales : but Ile tell thee one thing, twere better for thee quickly to arrest him, lest some other doing it before, and there be nothing left to pay thy debt: hold thy peace, faire words make fooles faine, and it is an old

saying, One bird in hand is worth two in bush: if thou dost not arrest him presently, I will not giue thee two pence for thy x. shillings. How shall I come by him, quoth the other? giue me but two pots of ale, and Ile betray him, said he. So they being agreed, this smooth-fac'd Judas comes to his late master, and told him that a friend of his at the doore would speake with him. The vnmistrusting man thinking no euill, went to the doore where presently an Officer arrested him at his mans suite.

The poore man seeing this, being stricken into a sudden sorrow, in the grieve of his heart spake to this effect: Ah thou lewd fellow, art thou the first man that seekes to augment my miserie? Haue I thus long giuen thee bread, to breed my ouerthrow? and nourisht thee in thy neede, to worke my destruction? Full little did I thinke, when thou so often diddest dip thy false fingers in my dish, that I gaue food to my chiefest foe: but what boote complaints in these extremes? Goe wife, quoth he, vnto my neighbours, and see if thou canst get any of them to be my baile. But in vaine was her paincs spent. Then he sent to his kinsfolkes, and they denied him: to his brother, and he would not come at him, so that there was no shift, but to prison he must: but as he was going, a Messenger met him with a letter from Master Cole, wherein as you heard, hee had promised him two hundred pounds: which when the poore man read, hee greatly reioyced, and shewing the same to the

Officer, hee was content to take his owne word. Whereupon Tom Doue went presently to Reading, where at his comming, he found all the rest of the Clothiers, lamenting Coles vntimely death; where the wofull widdow paid him the money, by which deed all the rest of the Clothiers were induced to doe something for Done. And thereupon one gaue him ten pounds, another twenty, another thirtie pounds, to begin the world anew: and by this meanes (together with the blessing of God) he grew into greater credit then euer hee was before. And riches being thus come vpon him, his former friends came fawning vnto him and when he had no neede of them, then euerie one was readie to proffer him kindnesse. His wicked seruants also that disdained him in his distresse, were after glad to come creeping vnto him, intreating with cap and knee for his fauour and friendship. And albeit hee seemed to forgiue their trespasses done against him, yet hee would often say, he would neuer trust them for a straw. And thus he euer after liued in great wealth and prosperitie, doing much good to the poore, and at his death, left to his children great lands.

How faire Margaret made her estate and high birth
knowne to her Master and Dame: and for the intire
loue she bore to Duke Robert, made a vow neuer to
marry, but became a Nun in the Abbey at Gloucester.
Chap. 15.

AFTER faire Margaret was come againe to Gloucester
neuer did she behold the cleare day, but with a weeping
eye: and so great was the sorrow which she conceiued,
for the losse of Duke Robert her faithfull Louer, that
she vtterly despised all the pleasures of this life, and at
last bewrayed her selfe in this sort vnto her Dame :

O my good Master and Dame, too long haue I dis-
sembled my parentage from you, whom the froward
destinies doe pursue to deserued punishment. The
wofull daughter am I of the vnhappy Earle of Shrews-
burie, who euer since his banishment, haue done nothing
but drawne mischance after mee : wherefore let me in-
treat you (dear Master and Dame) to haue your good
wills, to spend the remnant of my life in some blessed
Monasterie.

When Gray and his wife heard this, they wondred
greatly, as well at her birth, as at her strange deinaund.
Whereupon her dame knew not how to call her, whe-
ther Maiden or Madam, but said, O good Lord, are you
a Ladie, and I know it not? I am sorrie that I knew it
not before. But when the folkes of the house heard
that Margaret was a Lady, there was no small altera-
tion: and moreouer her Dame said, that she had

thought to haue had a match between her and her son : and by many perswasions did seeke to withdraw her from being a Nun, saying in this manner : What Margaret, thou art young and faire, the world (no doubt) hath better fortune for thee whereby thou maist leauue an honourable issue behind thee, in whom thou mayst liue after death.

These and many other reasons did they alledge vnto her, but all in vaine : she making this reply, Who knowes not that this world giueth the pleasure of an houre, but the sorrow of many daies ? for it paith euer that which it promiseth, which is nothing else but continuall trouble and vexation of the minde. Do you think, if I had the offer and choice of the mightiest Princes of Christendom, that I could match my selfe better then to my Lord Jesus ? No, no, hee is my husband, to whom I yeeld my selfe both body and soule, giuing to him my heart, my loue and my most firme affections : I haue ouerlong loued this vile world : therefore I beseech you farther disswade me not.

When her friends by no meanes could alter her opinion, the matter was made knowne to his Maiestie, who against the time that she should be receiued into the Monasterie, came to Gloucester with most part of his Nobilitie, to honour her action with his princely presence.

All things being therefore prepared, the young Lady was in most princely wise attired in a gowne of pure white sattin, her kirtle of the same, embroidered with gold about the skirts in most curious sort, her head was

garnished with gold, pearles, and precious stones, hauing her haire like thrids of burnisht gold, hanging downe behind in manner of a princely bride: about her yuory necke iewels of inestimable price were hung, and her handwrests were compassed about with bracelets of bright-shining Diamonds.

The streets thorow the which she should passe, were pleasantly deckt with greene oaken boughs. Then came the young Lady most like an heauenly Angell out of her masters house, at what time all the bells in Gloucester were solemnly rung: she being led betwixt the Kings Maiestie, hauing on his Royal Robes, and Imperiall Crowne, and the chiefe Bishop wearing his Miter, in a Cope of cloth of gold, ouer her head a Canopy of white silke, fringed about in princely manner: before her went an hundred Priests singing, and after her all the chiefe Ladies of the Land: then all the wiues and Maidens of Gloucester followed, with an innumerable sort of people on euery side standing to behold her. In this sort she passed on to the Cathedrall Church, where she was brought to the Nunry gate.

The Lady Abbesse receiued her: where the beautiful Maiden kneeling downe, made her prayer in sight of all the people: then with her owne hands she vndid her virgins faire gowne, and tooke it off, and gaue it away to the poore: after that, her kirtle, then her iewels, bracelets and rings, saying, Farewell the pride and vanitie of this world. The ornaments of her head were the next shee gaue away: and then was shee led on one

side, where she was stripped, and in stead of her smocke of soft silke had a smocke of rough haire put vpon her.

Then came one with a paire of sheares, and cut off her golden-coloured lockes, and with dust and ashes all bestrewed her head and face. Which being done, she was brought againe into the peoples sight bare foot and bare leg'd, to whom she said; Now farewell the world, farewell the pleasures of this life, farewell my Lord the King, and to the Dukes sweet loue farewell, now shall my eyes weepe for my former transgressions, and no more shall my tongue talke of vanity ; farewell my good Master and Dame, and farewell all good people.

With which words she was taken away, and neuer after seene abroad. When Duke Robert heard thereof, he desired that at his death, his body might be buried in Gloucester: in that Towne, quoth he, where first my cleare eyes beheld the heauenly beauty of my Loue, and where for my sake shee forsooke the world : which was performed accordingly.

The King also at his death requested to be buried at Reading, for the great loue hee bare to that place, among those Clothiers, who liuing were his hearts comfort. Gray dying wondrous wealthy, gaue land to the Monasterie whereinto Margaret was taken. William Fitzallen also dyed a most rich man, hauing builded many houses for the poore, whose sonne Henry after was the first Maior that was euer in London.

Sutton of Salisbury did also at his death much good, and gaue an hundred li. to be yeerely lent to poore

weauers of the Towne, to the worlds end. Simon of South-hampton gaue a most bounteous gift towards the building of a Monastery at Winchester. Hodgkins of Hallifax did also great good, and so did Cutbert of Kendall, who had married xxiii. couples out of his owne house, giuing each of them x. li. to beginne the world withall. Martin Briam of Manchester gaue toward the building of a free-schoole in Manchester, a great masse of money. And thus (gentle reader) haue I finished my storie of these worthy men, desiring thee to take my paines in good part, which will ingage me to greater matters, perciuing this curteously accepted.

FINIS.

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